

KidScreen[®]

About reaching children through entertainment

A Publication of Brunico Communications Inc.



**Celebrating 300 Episodes
And Growing Stronger
Every Season!**



The Animal Shelf™

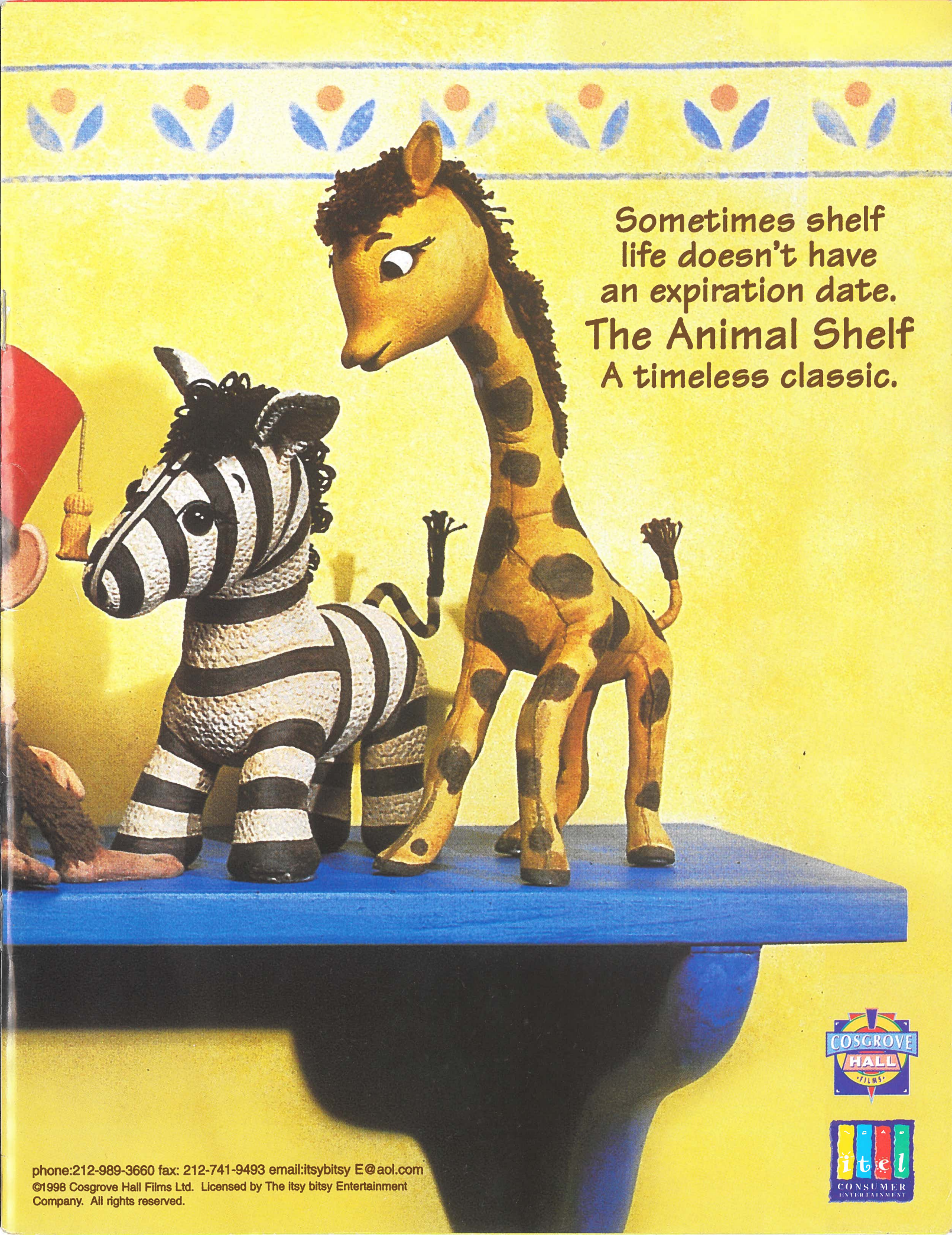


For more information contact:

The  **toybiz** Entertainment Company

...made from children's dreams!™

156 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010

A giraffe and a zebra toy are standing on a blue shelf. The giraffe is yellow with brown spots and a brown mane. The zebra is white with black stripes and a black mane. They are both looking towards the left. The background is a yellow wall with a decorative border of blue and orange shapes. The text is in the upper right corner.

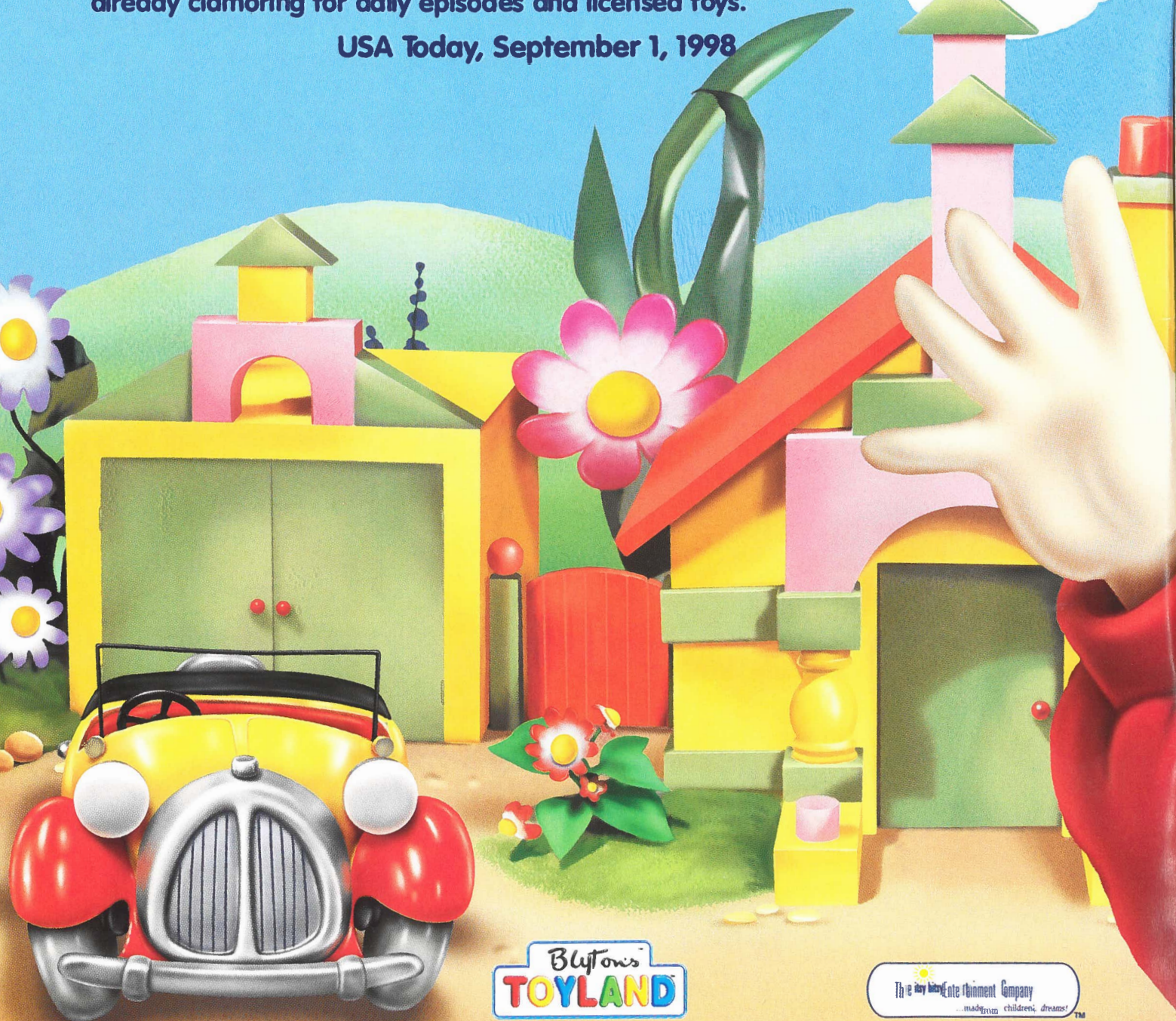
Sometimes shelf
life doesn't have
an expiration date.
The Animal Shelf
A timeless classic.



NODDY™

"Even before the PBS children's show "NODDY" began rolling out in most cities this week, local stations were already clamoring for daily episodes and licensed toys."

USA Today, September 1, 1998



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NEWS monitor

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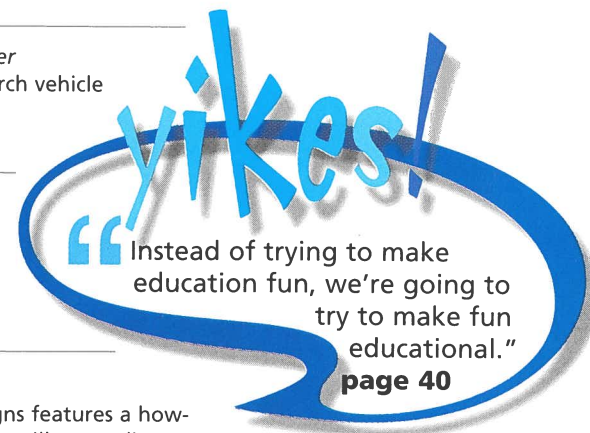
retail *available in North American editions only

R1 **Mattel** further diverges from toy base with the latest diversification into the education market via a merger with **The Learning Company**. **Also:** Retailers spend post-Christmas downtime flitting from toy fair to toy fair, sleuthing out the next "it" toy, and prepping promos for the next rush.

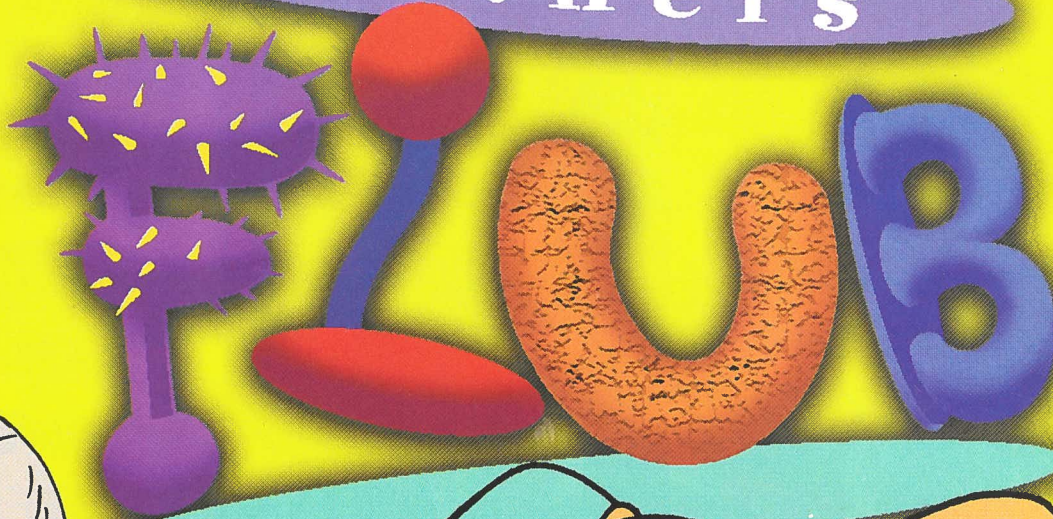
cover

Barbie is 40, Madeline is 60, Pooh's first book was published 73 years ago, and Star Wars is as omnipotent as always. Our cover depicts a Darth Vader action figure (as provided by Hasbro), who will be literally rejuvenated as the new Lucasfilm *Star Wars* trilogy renews a franchise that never died ("Black hole surrounds new *Star Wars* toys," page 70). Madeline (cover doll by Eden Toys), who was recently rejuvenated with a feature film, and has an upcoming DTV boost, is the kind of property that benefits from the exponential specialty store boom ("The specialty market: Values for your money," page 72). Some evergreen properties, such as Pooh, have cleverly evolved beyond the toy category, but still join the interactive bandwagon for smart toy iterations, such as Mattel's featured Sing N' Giggle gang (see page R3). At this year's Toy Fair, even quintessential toys reinvent the wheel, like Mattel's Barbie getting super-cyber to combat the age compression syndrome facing retail ("Age compression rattles the toy biz," page 57).

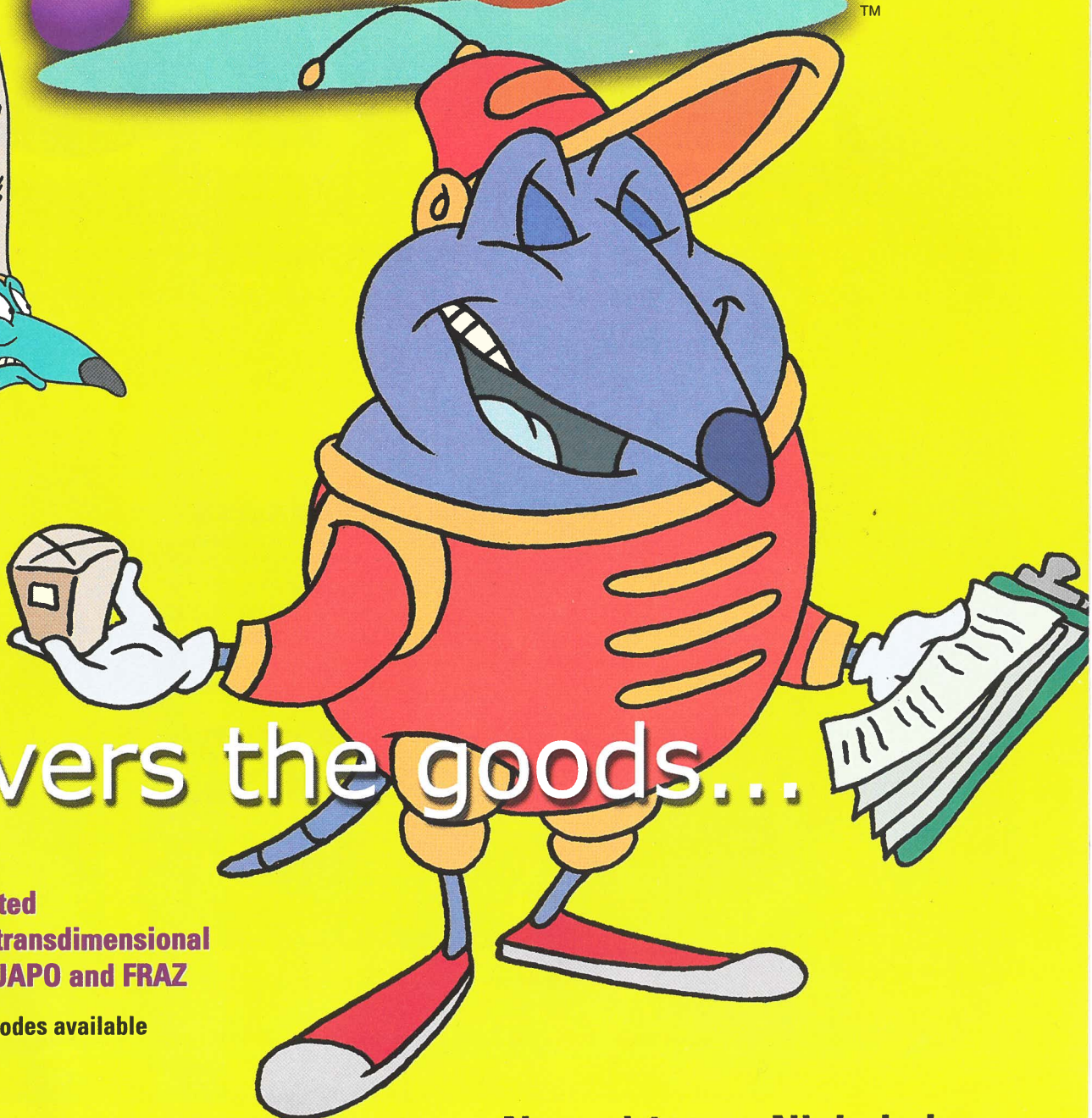
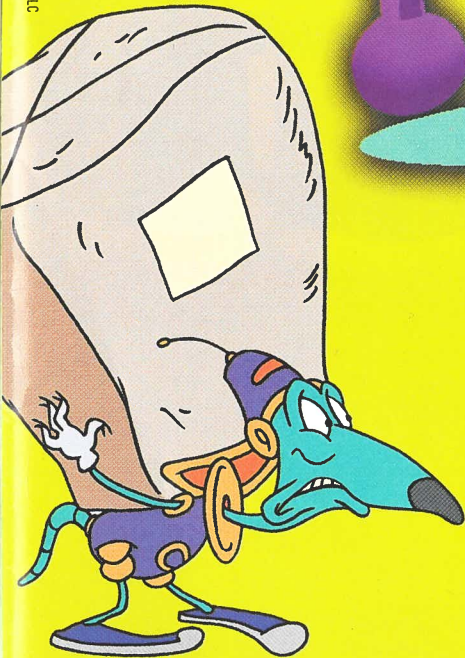
Copies of *KidScreen's* non-U.S. and Toy Fair issues have an advertising cover featuring Saban's *Power Rangers Lost Galaxy* © 1999, Saban.



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for our **SUCCESS** mainly due
to all of **you**

Bruno Zarka
Executive Licensing Manager

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The product that dare not speak its name

It's an odd state of affairs when an industry, however tacitly, denounces its primary stock in trade. But in 1998, the toy biz did just that. Toys 'R' Us initiated the trend back in the summer, when it unveiled a modified corporate mission statement to stockholders. No longer was its purview to be the "preeminent worldwide retailer of toys and juvenile products." Forthwith it would be, "Toys... The Worldwide Authority on Kids, Families and Fun."

In keeping with the soul-searching, an October *Businessweek* article featured a Hasbro senior marketing exec proclaiming that the Pawtucket, Rhode Island manufacturer now considered itself a leisure company—this from the makers of G.I. Joe and Mr. Potato Head. The semantic-sleights-of-hand continued during a December press conference announcing the acquisition of The Learning Company. Mattel's CEO Jill Barad said the purchase of the second largest producer of educational software "marked the beginning of the process of transforming Mattel from a toy company into a global children's products company."

Although conveniently vague, these new designations spread the gospel that each company is broadening its mix beyond the category that brought it prominence. And who can blame them for trying to disassociate from a commodity as troubled as toys? In the context of the previous 12 months, it all makes excellent PR sense. Whether it was retailers slashing their inventories, a less than 1% growth rate (for the summer period), or a customer base that took a take-it-or-leave-it attitude towards 'gotta-have' toy hopefuls, last year was a malaise-a-plenty.

The most troubling development was the statistical evidence that kids are increasingly disenchanted with traditional toys. The phenomenon, dubbed KAGOY (kids are getting older younger), is broached in our Toy Fair special report (see "Age compression rattles the toy biz," page 57), which examines solutions to stanch the flow of kids away from toys to video games.

For manufacturers, the antidote of consensus—go high-tech or go home—has, until now, invariably meant a liberal sprinkling of techno tzotchkes (i.e. LCD screens, talking chips) on recognizable toy designs, carried out under the rubric of reaching a new level of interactivity. For the most part, this much vaunted state of being has gone unquestioned as an ideal toy companies should strive to incorporate in their products.

Time out for evaluation: a furry animal that speaks one of 2,000 prerecorded phrases and blinks its eyes when its infrared sensors detect movement has been touted as the pinnacle of toy interactivity. But what level of interaction is achieved if it performs irrespective of what its child-owner says to it? Does Furby deserve the title of great toy, or is its success a triumph of marketing savvy and a shrewdly managed production schedule? Staff writer Duncan Hood explores these questions in his article "Anatomy of a Furby: The essential elements of a hit toy" (page 68). Perhaps what kids want from their toys is less interactivity, as it is currently construed, and more engagement. The ultimate interactive toy, then, is the one children can create themselves. This has long been the mantra of the specialty market, and a few companies working in mass are gradually adopting it as their own.

On its Barbie Web site, Mattel is leveraging e-commerce killer app—personalization—to enable girls to create Barbies to their own liking. Likewise, Lego's Transmedia Robots give kids the tools to construct robots using their imaginations as schematics.

In this Brave New World of toys, industry attention needs to focus less on semantics and across-the-board technology injection, and more on niche market satisfaction. The state of the toy market imitates the fractionalization of the kids TV pie. And with the licensing impact of a fragmented TV market and less bankable (and shorter) theatrical windows, trickle-down economics contribute to less of a mass market for toys at retail. Witness the growth of specialty toy chains ("The specialty market: Values for your money," page 72).

The world is converging to deliver personalized entertainment options, one of which is toys. Simon Ashdown, staff writer



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Time is running out...

This conference will cover the pressing issues in kids retailing today and is critical for all those involved in retailing to kids and teens. Hear from retailers, manufacturers and analysts as they discuss what works and what doesn't.

Companies that have already registered:

Alcone Marketing Group, Bealls Inc., Bell Sports, Binney & Smith, Briarpatch, Buena Vista Television, Children's Television Workshop, Cinar Corporation, Discovery Channel Stores, Dreamworks SKG, Flick Flack, Fox Licensing & Merchandising, Fund for American Libraries, Gable Group, Generator Corp, Hasbro Inc., Huffy Bicycles, Imagination Youth Marketing, ITP Entertainment Inc, J.C. Penny, Kid's Motion, J. Walter Thompson, KNEX, Lego Canada Inc., Mervyn's California, MTV, NHL, Noodle Kidoodle, Oral-B Laboratories, Rogers Video, Sears Inc., Target Stores, Spin Master Toys, The CDM Company, Toy Biz, Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, Video City, Whaley Marketing Group, Zellers

What's Your Say?

We will be promoting an interactive and ongoing dialogue with all of our delegates leading up to the conference. Soon, you will be able to give your ideas and input into additional topics of interest that you want to hear about and/or discuss. We will collect your ideas and address these issues at the breakfast roundtable discussions at the conference. So get thinking! What are some key issues in retailing that you want to hear about and talk about?

Conference Information

Conference rate for two days: **US \$995.00**

Save with our **Group rate**: Register 3, the 4th one's free

Resort Information

The conference will take place at the Marriott Mountain Shadows Resort. It's located just minutes from the airport in the foothills of Camelback Mountain. To secure hotel accommodations at a discount price, please call the hotel at 1.800.228.9290 at least 4 weeks prior to the conference and tell them you are a delegate for the Retailing to Kids & Teens conference. Book early, the hotel will sell out quickly!

Interested? 4 Easy Ways to Register:

Call Marlon Fermin toll free (within the U.S.) at 1.800.543.4512 ext.228 or 416.408.2300 ext.228

Fax: 416.408.0870 Website: www.brunico.com/retailingtokidsandteens/

Mail to: Meeta Chawla, 366 Adelaide St W., Suite 500, Toronto, ON Canada M5V 1R9

Or: Kimbirly Orr, 6399 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 711, Los Angeles, CA U.S.A. 90048

☐ US \$995.00 for conference ☐ I am the 4th person from my company attending; therefore, my registration fee is waived.

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Retailing to kids & teens[™] Conference

Hear From These Key Industry Players:

Brooke Adkins, Vice President, Catalogue Marketing and Public Relations, FAO Schwarz

Larry Castro, Vice President, Creative Productions

Julie Colbrese, Vice President, Creative Services, Davidson Marketing

Lara Chait, Director, Marketing, Channel One Network

Warren Chang, Vice President, Marketing, Zany Brainy

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Phil Guarascio, Vice President, General Manager of North American Operations, General Motors

Shawne Murphy Johnson, Senior Vice President/ Management Supervisor, Campbell Mithun Esty

Emme Kozloff, Vice President, Retail, Fox Family Worldwide

George Leon, Vice President, Promotions, Fox Family Worldwide

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Kenn Viselman, President and CEO, The itsy bitsy Entertainment Company

Isabel Walcott, Founder and President, SmartGirl Internette, Inc.

A two-day conference for retailers, manufacturers, marketers and entertainment companies who are targeting products and services to kids and teens.

March 4 and 5, 1999

**Marriott Mountain Shadows Resort
Scottsdale, Arizona**

Day One Keynote Speaker:

Phil Guarascio, Vice President, General Manager of North American Operations, General Motors

Sessions highlights include:

• Keynote Address: Kids Are Moving Into The Driver's Seat

Leading corporations are finding new and innovative ways of reaching kids as they shift marketing efforts towards this demographic. Learn why and how General Motors is targeting kids in new and exciting ways.

• Cool Hunting: The Search for Tomorrow's "in" Thing

'Cool' must be one of the most influential words in kids marketing, and yet also one of the most elusive. Where does 'cool' begin and how do companies go about finding it? Learn what some leading kids marketers are doing to stay ahead of the curve.

• Pre-School Panel Discussion - Where The Toys Are

Pre-school has become the hottest category in toy sales. Learn strategies retailers and manufacturers have adopted in this category and some of the reasons sales of toys to pre-schoolers are outpacing toy sales in other kid demographics.

• Will Star Wars Leave Room In The Galaxy For Anyone Else?

What do you do to compete against the likes of next year's mega-big Star Wars franchise? Hear about counterprogramming and other strategies and opportunities that are pursued when you are one of the many Davids facing a marketing Goliath.

• Outside The Box: A Look at Alternative Channels of Distribution

With the increasing sophistication of electronic commerce and other means of reaching kids, hear about the latest developments in alternative channels of distribution.

• Retailtainment - A New Marriage On The Store Front

Retailers have become very close partners with entertainment companies. Hear the latest developments in the growth of this alliance, which some in the industry are calling 'retailtainment'.

• Various Case Studies Including:

The Power Rangers Rocket Tour

How Fox Kids successfully utilized live events to drive sales and store traffic.

Attracting Kids to Domino's With Crazy Dr. Calvin

How Domino's Pizza succeeded in attracting kids by speaking directly to them with a distinct advertising focus.

A Guided Tour of Some of the Hot New Ideas in Kids Retailing Today, And Breakfast Roundtable Discussions

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What's Coming up...

The Golden Marble Awards are rolling again for 1999

The kids business grew last year with a new, but long overdue addition - its own advertising awards show and conference. With the support of major ad agencies, the media, clients and a host of marketing and creative services suppliers, The Golden Marble Awards was launched in New York. For the first time ever, people who work in the kids business had a chance to get together and to celebrate their work. At the same time, the industry took a first step towards establishing a creative standard that would help lift the bar through future awards shows. That future continues now.

KidScreen announces:

The Golden Marble Awards show and conference will expand in 1999.

The Golden Marble Awards:

The Golden Marble Awards will continue to focus on the celebration of excellence in advertising that targets kids. Building on last year's success, the show is expanding to encourage broader participation from the industry, in particular the suppliers of creative craft.

Promoting to Kids Awards:

This year's awards and conference program will be expanded to include marketing disciplines other than advertising. *KidScreen* is now working with the promotions industry to create a special awards show celebrating creative excellence in promotions that target kids. The Promoting to Kids Awards will be presented at the conclusion of the first day of a two-day awards and conference event. The Golden Marble Awards gala will conclude the event, taking place at the end of the second day.

A multi-track conference all about Marketing to Kids:

The conference component will be expanded this year in scope and industry participation. Conference content will cover a broader spectrum of marketing disciplines, demographic target groups and research and creative techniques. The conference will be diversified over a series of themed tracks. There will be major keynote addresses aimed at the entire conference attendance as well as seminars and break-out sessions addressing a variety of special interests. This conference will have something of interest for anyone in a business that targets kids.

The Place: New York City The Date: September 1999.

If you want to be involved, get rolling now. Call 1-888-MARBLES or 416-408-2300

www.kidscreen.com

Visit our website for full text searching of archived articles and more details on upcoming events and special features.

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Editorial features to look for:

March Issue

Spring Video Sell-through Report

Pre MIP TV

Advertising to Kids Series: Media (3 of 3)

Bonus Distribution at: NAVD, Palm Springs

April Issue

MIP TV

TeenScreen

Book Expo America

Bonus Distribution at: MIP TV, Cannes,

Book Expo America, LA

May Issue

Third Annual-Animation Report

LA Screenings

E3 Preview

RadarScreen

Bonus Distribution at: LA Screening;

Star Power, LA; E3, LA; Annecy '99, France;

KidPower '99, Orlando, FL

June Issue

New York Licensing Show Preview

Promax Preview

Bonus Distribution at:

Promax & BDA, San Francisco;

New York Licensing Show, NYC;

PBS Annual Meeting, San Francisco;

Digital Kids, San Francisco.

Retail Section

The *KidScreen Retail* monthly supplement highlights news and issues of special interest to those retailers who sell children's products. *KidScreen Retail* reflects our increased commitment to serve the information needs of kids retailers and those in the business of reaching children through entertainment.

**Editorial inquiries contact: Simon Ashdown
416-408-2300.**

TeenScreen

TeenScreen is a quarterly supplement to *KidScreen*, focusing on the exciting teen demographic.

Next Issue: April '99

RadarScreen

RadarScreen is a quarterly supplement to *KidScreen* that charts licensing and promotional opportunities related to children's family features scheduled for release in the years ahead.

Editorial contact: Virginia Robertson

323-966-4500

Starts on page 81.

kidScreen

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Single issue: US\$4.95.

Subscription rates:

In the United States, one year: US\$59.00.

In Canada, one year: CA\$79.00

(GST included. Registration #897050456 RT).

Elsewhere: US\$99.00.

Subscription E-mail: circ@brunico.com

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KidScreen, P.O. Box 1184, Lewiston, NY 14092-8184.

Canadian Postmaster: Send address corrections to

KidScreen, 366 Adelaide Street West, Suite 500,

Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5V 1R9. Canada Post

Canadian Publications Mail Sales Product

Agreement No. 0844853.

Printed in Canada.

ISSN number (1205-7746)

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Has anyone seen...



Tom AND Vicky



Perhaps they're playing in Granddad's garden.



Direct-to-Blockbuster titles introduced

Now indie filmmakers can skip the distributor and take their features directly to Blockbuster. The world's largest home video chain has recently decided to accept submissions directly from major studios, indie producers and distributors, as well as shopping for titles at festivals such as Sundance.

The chain plans to acquire exclusive U.S. domestic video rights to roughly 15 titles per year, and then stock them in stores with one million customers a day. Features that have aired on TV, or that have had limited theatrical releases will be considered, as well as brand new productions. Between 24 and 36 titles a year will also be acquired directly from Showtime cable net, a fellow Viacom company.

Cartoon Network announces three new series

Cartoon Network is launching three new half-hour original series, and grabbing 214 Looney Tunes shorts formerly licensed to Nick for 1999. New series *Courage the Cowardly Dog*, *I Am Weasel* and *Mike, Lu & Og* will up the channel's daily original programming from 90 minutes to two hours. Set for a November debut, *Mike, Lu & Og*, from *Rugrats* creative producer Chuck Swenson, follows the adventures of a sophisticated young New York girl named Mike on an uncharted island with natives Lu and Og. Also premiering in November, *Courage the Cowardly Dog*, created, written and directed by John Dilworth, features a timid dog who defends an elderly farming couple from various paranormal phenomena. *I Am Weasel* (and nemesis I. R. Baboon) spins off from *Cow and Chicken*, and launches as a separate series in June.

When the Looney Tunes shorts are added to Cartoon's existing library in the fall, the channel will be in a tie position with Kids' WB! for the largest collection. The acquisition will allow beefed up versions of existing Looney Tunes shows, plus the introduction of a new franchise called *Chuck Jones Showcase*. Finally, Cartoon announced it will produce 75 new episodes for renewed series over the next year, and develop 14 animated shorts to debut as series pilots on the *What A Cartoon! Show* over the next two years. **DH**

Teletubbies knock-off spurs legal action

The itty bitty Entertainment Company is taking legal action to prevent Mexican broadcaster TV Azteca from continuing to air a series that its president and CEO Kenn Viselman says appears to be a copy of the tremendously hot *Teletubbies* series. The TV Azteca series has many similarities to the Ragdoll Productions original, down to its name, *TeleChobis*, says Viselman, whose New York-based company is *Teletubbies'* distributor in North America. Other elements that Viselman says are similar to the original series include singing characters, intercut live-action sequences and a magic talking tree setting that closely resembles the magic dome with talking trumpets found in *Teletubbies*.

At press time, court proceedings in the Mexican case were slated to begin January 15, according to David Levine, itty bitty's director of legal affairs and business development. The suit against TV Azteca claims copyright infringement, and will seek to have the series immediately removed from broadcast. "We are going to avail ourselves of all recourse available under Mexican law, including damages and the cost of bringing the lawsuit," says Levine.

Giving assurance that *Teletubbies* would air commercial-free, both TV Azteca's Mexican competitor, Televisa, and Brazil's TV Globo Network were able to secure above-board deals with itty bitty to run 130 half-hour episodes of the preschool series starting in early 1999. **VR**

Changes at the top at Kids' WB!

Jean MacCurdy's four-year stint as president of Kids' WB! programming has come to an end; the position has been assumed by Donna Friedman, formerly VP of marketing and associate creative director at Nickelodeon. MacCurdy will retain the title of president of Warner Bros. TV Animation and Hanna Barbera, overseeing development and sales of the studio's animated TV product.

According to Susanne Daniels, entertainment president at the WB, the move is part of a larger reorganization that will transform Kids' WB! (formerly operated under the auspices of Warner Bros. TV Animation) into an in-house operation. According to Daniels, the network had long-standing plans to bring its kids block in-house once the parent network was prepared to make the financial commitment.

"We want to bring in a spectrum of genres, from kids to docudramas to dramas to family product, so we're looking for all sorts of different types," says spokesperson Karen Raskopf. "Our research has confirmed that our customers want variety—what we're trying to do is to make sure we offer that."

Blockbuster will display the exclusive titles in the new releases section, backing them with shelf talkers announcing "new title" or "only at Blockbuster." In-store monitor ads, window banners, *Preview* magazine coverage and electronic advertising for select titles will also help get the word out. Raskopf says interested filmmakers and distributors should contact Greg Creel at 214-854-3000. **DH**

Declining kid TV viewership spurs speculation

by Virginia Robertson

In the fourth quarter of 1998, kids TV viewership was down 9% from the previous year's fourth quarter, according to Nielsen's Persons Using Television (PUT) ratings—a statistic that's calculated by monitoring "people-meters" attached to TVs in 5,000 sample homes in the U.S. (when the tube is turned on, each viewer in the room presses a personally assigned button on the meter, allowing Nielsen's number crunchers to record what members of different age demos are watching). The PUT results sparked questions about the future of kids TV, as well as skepticism about exactly what that number really reflects.

As programmers devise ways to stem the erosion in the kids market, cable and broadcast TV executives express varying degrees of alarm at the 9% figure. "It's just a fourth quarter phenomenon," argues Nickelodeon's VP and general manager Cyma Zarghami. "Based on my instincts, I think it's going to come back." Nickelodeon asserted its corporate health in 1998 by putting five new animated series into production for launch in fall of 1999, investing hundreds of millions of dollars (US).

Like Zarghami, few cable programmers are likely to panic over the PUT findings, as cable saw widespread ratings growth this fourth quarter over last. Cabletelevision Advertising Bureau's (CAB) analysis of Nielsen data shows that basic cable's fourth quarter numbers hit record highs in 1998. However, the four major broadcast networks—ABC, NBC, Fox and CBS—experienced audience erosion in all categories, so the drop in kids was seen as one indicator of an overall decline.

Indeed, Nielsen's overall ratings for kids blocks among kids ages two to 11 for fourth quarter 1998 versus the same time period in 1997 indicate that the networks declined more than cable; ABC was down 9%, Kids' WB! was down 23%, CBS was down 14% and Fox Kids was down 19%. Alternatively, Nick only declined 2%, and three channels saw increases. Disney Channel increased by 50% (thanks to a drastic growth in the channel's subscriber base, which swelled by 44% this year), and Cartoon Network rose 8% (thanks in part to a 17% increase in subscribing homes). Since Fox Family Channel did not target children before this year, its kids viewership rose 300%.

Although kids outlets acknowledge that both Nielsen and PUT ratings indicate a decline in viewership, many point out that these percentages fail to take into account mitigating factors, such as the disparity between kid viewership of children's shows versus adult fare, which was noted by both Zarghami and Griffin Bacal president Paul Kurnit. While kid viewership of adult TV has dropped, ratings for kids blocks amongst the two to 11 set has held steady, say both Zarghami and Kurnit. "The decline in kid viewership of adult TV is consistent with a decrease in adult viewership," notes Zarghami. "Kids may merely be reflecting what their parents are doing, which is watching less TV."

The move

will mean that Kids' WB! will

be more receptive to outside product. "Most of our own product is WB-generated and WB-owned," says Daniels, "but that doesn't mean it has to come through Warner Bros. TV Animation." She adds that a select amount of outside development and some acquisitions will be pursued by Friedman.

At Nickelodeon, Friedman was part of the original team that launched the channel and wrote the "How-to Nick" philosophy statement. Subsequently, she was instrumental in Nick's launches in the U.K. and Latin America. **VR**

Teens ubiquitous on French tube

by Pascale Paoli

As the teen demographic around the world continues its astronomical growth in terms of both sheer population and spending power, global broadcasters are waking up to the moneymaking potential that lies in specifically targeting the young adult set. Recent developments in the French market exemplify this mass recognition and hail the dawning of the teen era.

TF1's new teen offering

After measuring the growing interest from teenagers and young adults for series such as *Saint-Tropez*, *Melrose Place* and other Aaron

Spelling productions (not to mention the accompanying advertising bonanza), private group TF1 has announced it will launch a cable and satellite channel exclusively dedicated to teenagers and young adults ages 15 to 35 in the year 2000 or 2001.

This project, placed under the developing responsibility of Jean-Guilhem Lerouge, has been called, for the time being, TFX (standing for TF1 and Fox). Following TF1's takeover of Fox boss Rupert Murdoch's company News Corp. Europe last November, this new channel could be a joint venture between the two groups, helping Murdoch enter the French market.

But as TF1's CEO Patrick Le Lay intends to launch the channel on cable and satellite platform TPS, M6 (also transmitted on the platform) raises the objection that TFX would be unfair competition. Since its creation 10 years ago, M6's main target has been the 15 to 35 demographic, and the channel is threatening to discontinue its exclusivity on TPS.

Hip mag series cleans up in France 2's new teen slot

France 2 has established a new prime-time slot for young adults (ages 15 to 25) from 5:25 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Wednesdays. The opening, which launched in January, houses *Rince ta Baignoire* (literally *Rinse your Bathtub*), a magazine show that has consistently garnered a 15% to 15.5% weekly audience share since its October launch in the channel's Saturday morning block.

"Teens" continued on page 30

Fox Family Worldwide's Steve Leblang, senior VP of research, says PUT measures a broad demographic (kids ages two to 11); a closer look reveals significant differences among more specific demos. According to Fox Family Worldwide's research, viewership among six- to 11-year-olds has declined only 3%, while the preschool segment has felt a much steeper drop. "There's a greater decline in usage levels of two- to five-year-olds—that's down 14%," says Leblang, who attributes the drop to an increase in the home video usage. "Ninety-seven percent of homes have a VCR, and there seems to be an increased use of tape playback for kids this age."

Zarghami refers to the findings of "Kid's Beat" TV usage study from TN Media (December 1998), which conclude that from September to November of last year, there was "an increase in kids viewing of kids programs, and [a] simultaneous decline in viewing of non-kids programming." The study shows that weekly kid viewership of kids programs during this three-month period totaled 6.62 hours in 1998, up from 5.45 hours per week in 1996. "Kid's Beat" concludes that the increasing number of TV sets per household, plus the wealth of kids programming on multiple cable networks and in prime time, contribute to kids abandoning adult programs in favor of kids blocks.

While Kurnit agrees that the main area of decline in kid viewership was for adult shows, he points out that over the past year, kids have come to watch about one hour less of television per week. "You've got to put that in context, however," Kurnit notes. "TV is still the number one form of kids entertainment, and they're still watching over 20 hours per week."

Disney Channel's senior VP of marketing, Eleo Hensleigh, says some industry alarm over PUT's fourth quarter findings stems from the fact that this is the first time in recent memory that kids viewership numbers have gone down. In addition, the fourth quarter results are scrutinized more closely than other ratings because Q4 reflects how new fall programs have fared. Shows that drive toy product must perform during the holiday period, says Barbara Thompson, senior VP and marketing director at L.A.'s Foote, Cone & Belding. "It's an important time period." However, Thompson holds that agency media directors do not yet have definitive fourth quarter numbers with which to make a thorough analysis of where the declines are and how severe.

Disney's own in-house tracking studies explored what straying kid viewers were doing with their time, they found computers to be television's biggest threat. And a 1998 Nickelodeon On-line Attitude and Usage Study shows that while only 12% of kids are on-line today, that number is expected to increase to 47% by the year 2002.

"I don't know that kids themselves would suggest that computers compete with TV," Kurnit says, adding that a wide array of factors—even general lifestyle changes among children, such as increased sports involvement—are affecting the decline in TV watching. "Kids and teens are also sleeping less, there's so much for them to do," Kurnit says. A University of Michigan study found that kids' leisure time has dropped from 40% per day in 1981 to 30% in 1997.

Kidvid, which also occupies the tube, may pose more of a threat than Internet usage because many kids with computer and Internet access watch TV while they're logged on. "Kids are multi-tasking," stresses Kurnit, and Zarghami adds that, "kids ages five to 11 have a great capacity to do more than one thing at a time." Leblang's findings confirm that as many as one-third of all kids watching TV are occupied simultaneously by other tasks (telephone, computer, etc.).

"Decline" continued on page 33

PBS to launch digital kids channel

Touted as the first fully interactive broadcast service in the U.S., PBS Kids Channel is hitting airwaves in September. The 24-hour, all-digital channel will be available for local broadcast to all member stations, featuring such shows as *Teletubbies*, *Barney & Friends*, *Wishbone*, *Wimzie's House*, *Noddy* and *Zoboomafoo*. The channel's launch is part of a larger PBS Kids initiative to provide more funds for original kids programming and Internet content.

The channel's interactivity will be developed through related content on the PBS Online Web site, as well as through interactive shows such as *Zoboomafoo*, a

For the record:

Cinar has inked an agreement to purchase all outstanding shares of Israel-based multimedia publisher Edusoft. Known primarily for its flagship *English Discoveries* learning series, Edusoft produces CD-ROM titles under English Learning, Early Learning, Science and Technology lines in 20 languages for consumer and in-school use. The eight-year-old company based in Rosh Ha'ayin, Israel, distributes products to the U.S., Latin America, Europe and East Asia, and reported net profits of just over US\$3 million in fiscal 1997 based on revenues of US\$13.6 million.

The acquisition's total cash sales price is approximately US\$40.2 million, with shareholders receiving just over US\$8.33 per share after investment banking fee deductions. The deal has been approved in principle by the board of Degem Systems, which holds about 60% of Edusoft shares. Cinar Educational's expanding operations now include Edusoft along with two U.S.-based companies, Carson-Dellosa Publishing and HighReach Learning.

- The U.S.-based Odyssey Channel, due to be overhauled shortly under new partners Hallmark Entertainment and The Jim Henson Company, has recently received good news and bad news. On the up side, second-largest U.S. cable system TeleCommunications has signed a multiyear renewal deal increasing the channel's subscriber base from six to eight million. On the down side, Time Warner Cable dropped the channel from its basic tier to launch New York event listings channel MSG Metro Guide, costing Odyssey about 1.1 million subscribers.

- Children's Television Workshop has started pre-pro on an original Egyptian *Sesame Street* co-production with Cairo-based Karma Productions. Mainly funded by a grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development, *Sesame Street's* Egyptian incarnation will be produced by a local crew, and is slated to debut for Ramadan in December.

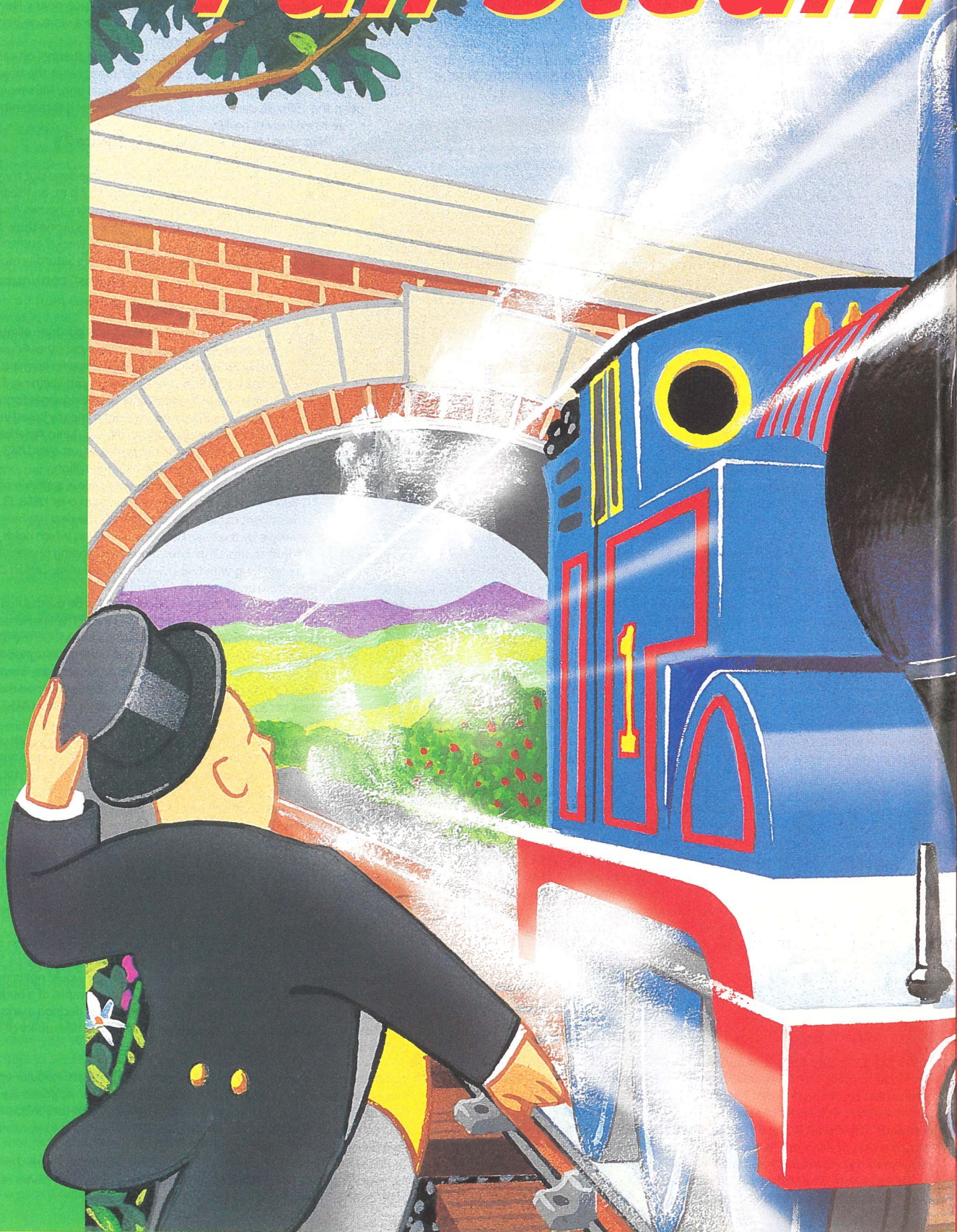
- Disney has consolidated all Disney Studios operations under chairman Joe Roth, with the promotion of Peter Schneider to president of The Walt Disney Studios. Formerly president of Walt Disney Feature Animation and Walt Disney Theatrical Productions, Schneider will now work with Roth to oversee the creative development, production, marketing and distribution of all Disney entertainment products. Schneider's position was filled in turn by former executive VP Thomas Schumacher.

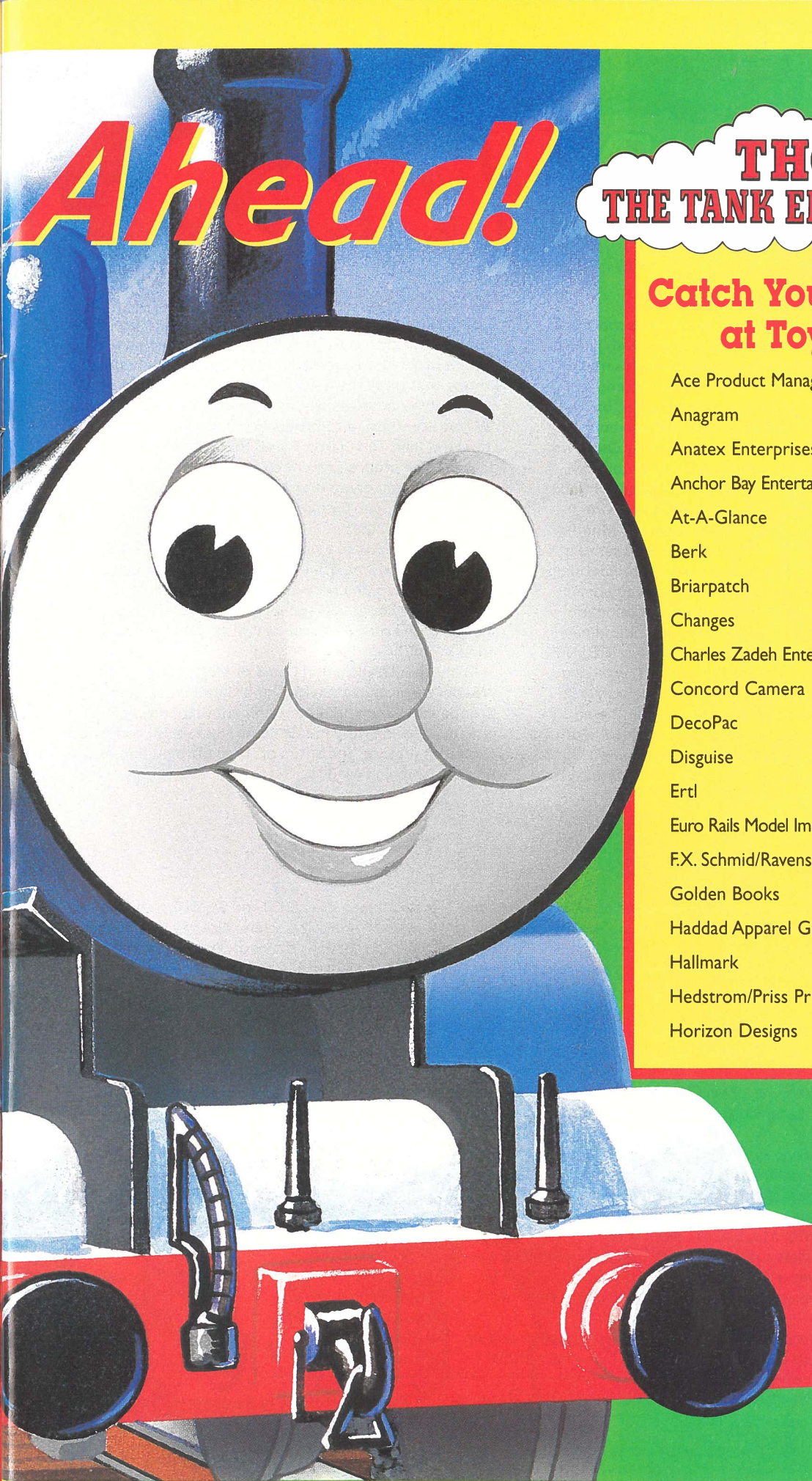
In other Disney news, the company recently recalled 3.4 million copies of *The Rescuers* video after discovering that two of the animated feature's 110,000 frames contained "objectionable" background images. Disney would not comment on the nature of the images, but they are reported to be photographs of a nude woman inserted during original production in the mid-1970s. The decision marks Disney's first-ever video recall, and prompted the company to initiate a new policy of inspecting every frame of video masters before future releases.

preschool wildlife series created by Chris and Martin Kratt. Regular episodes of the show debuted in January, and the first four "enhanced" episodes are launching on PBS Kids later this year. Enhanced episodes, developed in conjunction with Intel, will feature puzzles and games simultaneously transmitted to personal computers capable of receiving digital signals.

PBS also announced that it raised US\$12.2 million in program sponsorships for the fourth quarter of 1998, a 58% increase over the US\$7.5 million raised in the same quarter a year earlier. **DH**

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Up Next...

WHAT'S DEVELOPING IN KIDS PRODUCTION

Kevin sells around the world

Based on the books by Daniel Postgate, *Kevin Saves the World* draws in kids ages four to eight with likable but hopelessly inept Kevin, his misadventures and ultimate triumphs. The 13 five-minute episodes, budgeted at US\$800,000, are animated and co-produced by Oscar-winning British animator Bob Godfrey of U.K.-based Bob Godfrey Films and Kine Aune of Norway's Kinefilm. The cel-animated series is slated for a September delivery, and has already been picked up by Nickelodeon UK, Nickelodeon Scandinavia, RTE, ABC Australia, VPRO, NRK, YLE-FST, DR and SVT, with negotiations currently underway with other broadcasters. Dublin-based Monster Distributes has worldwide distribution rights, and ABC-TV has acquired video rights in Australia and New Zealand. No specific air dates were available at press time.



Sony subsidiaries land deals

Sunbow Entertainment has inked a deal to produce 26 half hours of *The Cramp Twins* as the second project in a multi-year co-production agreement with Cartoon Network Europe that gives the network first right of refusal on all new Sunbow products. The first Sunbow series chosen was *Fat Dog Mendoza*, a co-production with Germany's TMO-Loonland (like *The Cramp Twins*) that's slated for a fall delivery. The prodco's recent co-production slate has also included *Three Friends and Jerry* and *Little Lulu*. Budgeted at US\$375,000, *The Cramp Twins* is slated for delivery in fourth quarter 2000.

The series features twin bothers Lucien and Wayne who are mirror opposites. Their comic adventures in fantasy metropolis Soap City provide the kind of quirky comedy that Sunbow hopes will appeal to kids ages six to 11. The show is based on a Bloomsbury Artists children's book by Brian Wood.

In another deal, 26 half hours of *Mega Babies*, a Sony Wonder co-production with Lion's Gate Media, Ciné-Groupe and Landmark Entertainment Company has been picked up for delivery in fall '99 by Fox Family Worldwide. The series features the antics of three off-beat babies, Derrick, Buck and Meg.

DK series cover the world around and within us

Three new shows from U.K.-based Dorling Kindersley Vision are set to show kids how things work, from the plumbing of their houses to the plumbing of their bodies. *The Way Things Work*, aimed at the nine to 12 set, stars the loyal and long-suffering assistant to the eccentric 2-D inventor, The Great Woolly Mammoth, in a show about deconstructing the technology around us for the technophobic. The 26 15-minute episodes are budgeted at about US\$175,000 each, and are intended to be shown in couplets. The show is being co-produced with Canadian distributor Canamedia, with pilots scheduled for completion this spring.

My Amazing Human Body takes over in the realm of the organic and attempts to answer such compelling questions as "Why do feet stink?". The 26 x 15-minute series is also intended to be shown in couplets and was commissioned by Channel 4. With a budget of US\$1.3 million, skeleton star Seemore Skinless and friends educate and entertain kids ages six to nine with a mix of live-action and 2-D animation. *My Amazing Human Body* is also currently in development with

pilots slated for the spring.

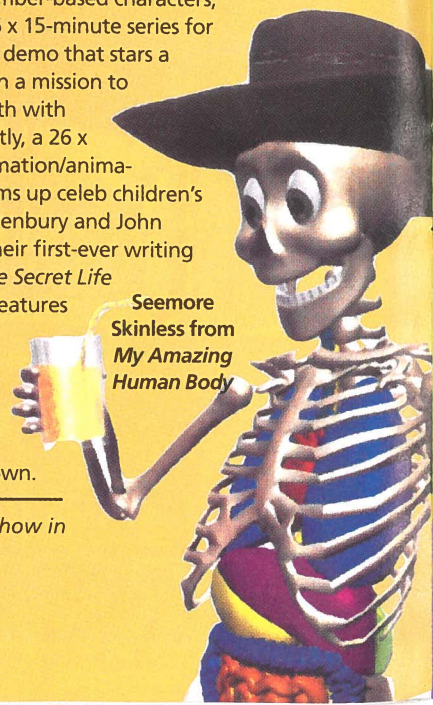
Rounding out the DK trio is *Parsnip*, starring the lamb from the popular pop-up books by Sue Porter. Targeting girls ages two to five, the 52 five-minute shorts

cost between US\$22,500 and \$25,000 each, and feature well-known characters voiced by real children.

Also, in the early stages of development at DK are: *The Numberlies*, a 52 x five-minute series for preschoolers about a town full of silly 2-D animated number-based characters; *Tooth Troop*, a 26 x 15-minute series for the four to seven demo that stars a group of aliens on a mission to swap wobbly teeth with lost coins; and lastly, a 26 x 15-minute a claymation/animation mix that teams up celeb children's authors Helen Oxenbury and John Burningham in their first-ever writing collaboration. *The Secret Life of Georgy Plum* features a shy boy and his dog who transform themselves into superheroes to defeat the dreaded Class Clown.



The Secret Life of Georgy Plum

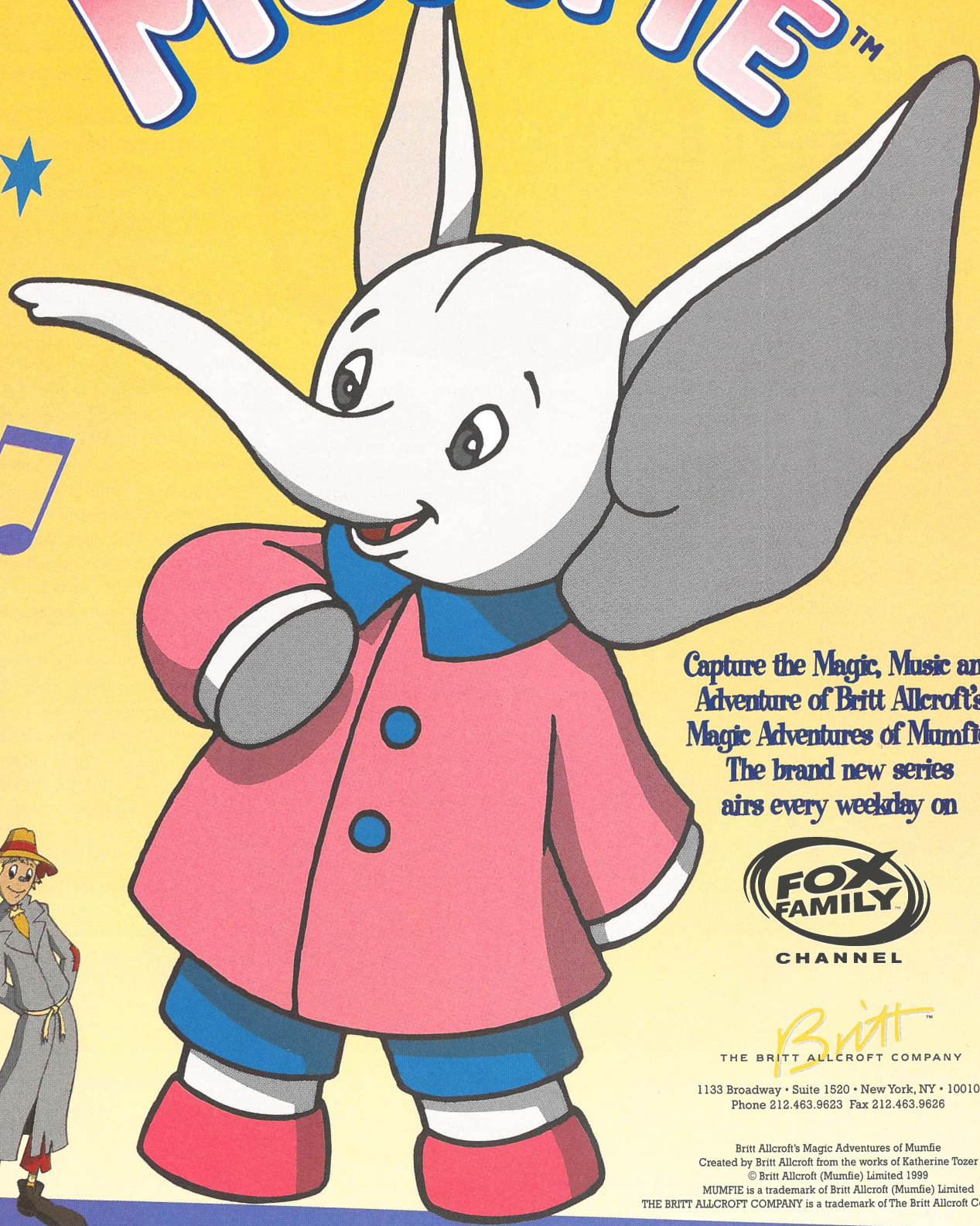


Seemore Skinless from *My Amazing Human Body*

This regular feature keeps tabs on what's coming up in kids production. If your company has a new show in development which has just been greenlit, pass the news on to KidScreen West Coast editor Virginia Robertson. Coordinates: Tel (323) 966-4500/Fax (323) 852-0223 (vrobertson@brunico.com)

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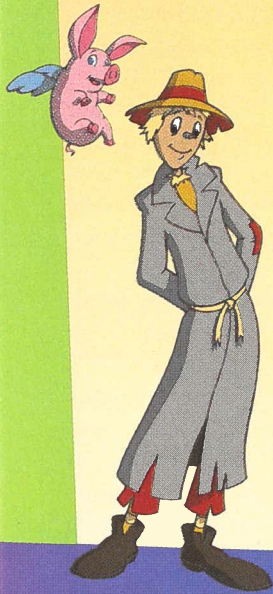
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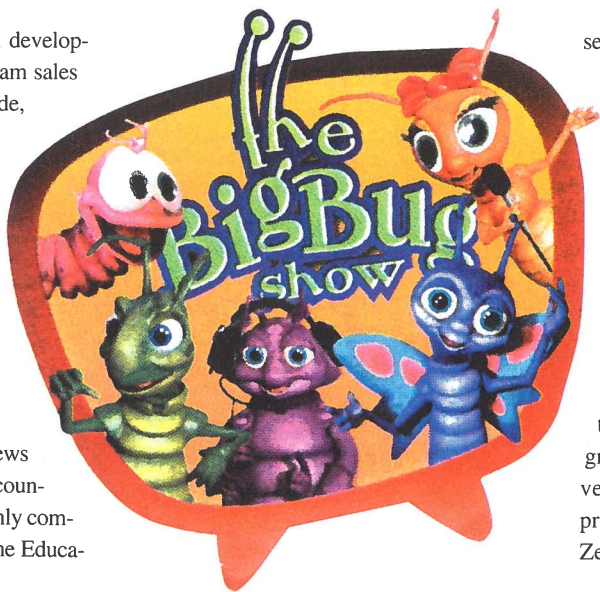


New kidcasters eyeing Israel

Kids TV in Israel is in a transitional development period, with international program sales getting in gear on the production side, and new players hovering on the broadcast front.

There was a buzz at MIPCOM over the first Israeli kids show to attract international buyers when Israel's Noga Communications signed a breakthrough deal for its *Big Bug Show*. The in-house project sold to ITV (Good Morning Television).

The international sale is welcome news to Noga, a partner in Channel 6, the country's sole children's channel. Noga's only competition during the past four years is the Educa-



tional Channel (a government funded organization that airs a block of programs on Israel's Channel 1 and Channel 2), but

serious competition is right around the corner. As soon as Israel's cable consortium and the government come to a compensation agreement, licenses for direct-to-satellite broadcasting will be awarded.

Global titans of children's broadcasting are cued to grab a piece of the DBS pie. Fox Kids Central Europe is aligned with Saban Israel, a company that currently distributes Saban and Fox shows in Israel. Alona Abt of Argo Films in Tel Aviv says she is also spearheading a group that wants to become a DBS network program provider. Her partner in the proposed venture is MTVS-Meimad Studios, a post production facility backed by the media giant Ze'ev Moses Group.

Abt says there are two options available for her new co-venture. One avenue is to simply become a partner for a big local channel. Branding a local channel is another route.

"We are keen to bring over branded channels such as Nickelodeon," says Abt. "As we see it, Argo has the advantage of being flexible because we are an independent local group." Not only would Argo help smooth permissions to broadcast in the territory, as Israel's top independent supplier of children's programming, Abt says her company could "help on the local production front."

Ehud Meron, president and CEO of Noga Communications, describes the DBS change as a challenge "to read the map and gain ground." The *Big Bug Show* sale was one small step forward, and the publicity will help establish Noga as a pioneer and potential consultant for formatting new channels.

Cable broadcasters are not sitting idly and waiting for the DBS onslaught. In addition to negotiating longer franchise agreements with the government, they are investigating the cost of implementing digital TV. Meron says cable companies are considering splitting the channels by demographic, or establishing an umbrella channel on basic cable with dedicated channels on digital.

Noga leads Israeli parade into global market

Children's programming in Israel can be described by two letters—VJs. Young video jockeys populate the dedicated children's channel, as well as the educational programming blocks on other stations. Local stars command top salaries, and easily make the transition into TV, movies and merchandising deals.

VJs are faces that serve as local brands. Unfortunately, VJ-driven shows do not have export value. As a result, Noga Communications developed its preschool puppet program, the *Big Bug Show*—a successful export-friendly bid that's produced in segments that can run as interstitials or be packaged together as a 22-minute program. However, the series' US\$100,000 per hour cost is double what Noga normally pays for licensing independent shows. To sustain production, Ehud Meron, president and CEO of Noga, is hoping to find co-producers to assist with new episodes, and by April, the company hopes to complete 26 x 20-minute shows. ITV will air the shows as full episodes, but distributor Philippa Kowarsky says other countries are interested in buying them as interstitials.

Producing a pure puppet show for tots is also the route Alona Abt of Argo Films is taking: "Unlike the *Big Bug Show*, which is formatted to work as interstitials, *Mimi and Me* is a proper series, done in the old fashioned way."

With 10 episodes under her belt and 18 more in production, Abt is hoping to make the second international sale in the history of Israeli children's programming. She hopes Noga has paved the way: "I think that any sale brings a positive output in any territory."

In the past, Abt found it impossible to sell kids series because of the live-action/animation combo, but now the VJ segments are being strategically placed at the beginning and end of the show so they can be cut from an international version.

The Educational Channel's big breakthrough was to produce *Rechov Sumsum/Shara's Simsim*, a puppet show in Hebrew and Arabic designed with the help of the creators of *Sesame Street*. After many false starts and production hurdles, the show is now airing on the Educational Channel and the four-year-old Palestinian channel. *Rechov Sumsum/Shara's Simsim* promotes peace and cooperation between Arabs and Israelis, and producers hope it will eventually sell into other territories. **KM**

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Stevie
Stardust

It's a buyer's market at Super RTL

Stevie Stardust, a 3-D animated co-production between Berlin-based Stardust Entertainment, Hallmark Entertainment and Super RTL partner Hahn Films, is a recent addition to Super RTL's kids slate, and will be used extensively in branding efforts targeting boys, says Andreas Seitz, head of communications at the German network.

Twenty-six half-hour episodes of the series were acquired by Susanne Schosser, who, as Super RTL's director of programming, is the channel's primary buyer of kids programming. Schosser paid an undisclosed "standard license fee" for the program, which at Super RTL means between US\$60,000 and US\$90,000 for unlimited runs of a co-produced series. About 20% of Super RTL's kids programming, which airs 12 hours per day on the network, is produced in-house, whereas 80% is acquired.

"*Stevie Stardust* will be a key character in animation programming, and will be used in interstitials as well," says Seitz. The series targets boys in the all-important seven to 11 demo, and incorporates high-quality, cutting-edge animation techniques, another criteria that weighs heavily at Super RTL. "We have a good image concerning animation," notes Seitz. "This series shows that Super RTL is willing to go in different ways, not just well-proven ones." Seitz adds that parental approval must be considered by programmers in Germany, so the edginess of acquisitions shouldn't go too far. "Parents may make choices for kids—they always glimpse what kids are watching," he says.

According to Seitz, several factors make acquired kids programming more attractive than ever in Germany. First, the exit of Nickelodeon from the German broadcasting landscape has resulted in a 10% drop in licensing fees, a development which was very noticeable at MIPCOM '98. Secondly, local high-tech animation that's affordable is rare. "It's really hard in Germany to produce [animation] oneself, especially when the quality of international product is so high," he notes.

Riding high on the pick-up wave, Seitz says Super RTL is currently ranked number one among kids ages three to 13 in Germany, with RTL's kids block and ProSieben finishing second and third respectively.

Currently, Super RTL is looking for high-quality live-action programming that targets older kids. Seitz says previous live-action offerings at the network have not fared as well as animation, so a success in this category is being vigorously pursued. VR

Kinderkanal vying for hot properties and trolling for tweens

The toddler-skewing nature of *Teletubbies* makes the preschool phenom a good fit for ARD/ZDF Kinderkanal, which placed the recent acquisition ahead of *Sesame Street* in its preschool block starting at 8 a.m. Ninety episodes were obtained, all of which will be tailored to the German market by re-shooting the live-action segments in local settings, says Sebastian Debertin, head of acquisitions and co-production at Kinderkanal. The channel is currently considering an option to pick up an additional 170 episodes of the program, which Debertin believes "fits perfectly into the German landscape."

The channel, which programs to young kids from 8 a.m. until 7 p.m. each day, concludes its children's programming with a block called "Sandman" in the early afternoon to evening—a slot for which it recently re-purchased *Country Mouse City Mouse* from Cinar. "Last year, the first 26 episodes were very successful, so we decided to acquire an additional 26," notes Debertin. "We'd like to have this as a longer-running property at Kinderkanal," he says, adding that such flagship shows are brand-builders for the block.

According to Debertin, the channel has a rough time competing price-wise with other networks for properties such as *Teletubbies*, as it is publicly funded and cannot match the fees paid by commercial networks. As



Sebastian Debertin

As a result, acquisitions make up only 30% of the channel's schedule, the bulk of which is comprised of co-productions involving Kinderkanal's founding networks, ARD, the number one network in Germany, and ZDF, which ranks number two. Kinderkanal, as a joint venture between the two German nets, is occasionally able to offer distributors like the BBC's Theresa Plummer-Andrews (who made the *Teletubbies* deal with Debertin), possible "back end" deals with ARD and ZDF after the episodes have run on Kinderkanal. The channel also recently signed a shared-window deal with ZDF for Jim Henson Television's *Bear in the Big Blue House*, the terms of which give Kinderkanal a three-year first-window opportunity to air the show, before it is shared by both broadcasters. But even with the future potential for higher fees that these deals bring, acquisitions are tough for Kinderkanal to make as the channel's licensing fees are only one-quarter of what the commercial networks pay, says Debertin. "It sometimes takes a long time to convince companies like EVA and HIT to agree on our figures, they're so small," he says.

Still, the broadcaster has achieved a number two rating among young children in its short 23 months of existence.

Debertin is currently looking for strong older kids-targeted sitcoms, like *Student Bodies*, a live-action/animation series produced by Montreal's Telescene Film Group that was recently renewed on Kinderkanal. He says the tween audience in Germany is particularly hard to reach because they've often already moved on to grown-up fare. VR

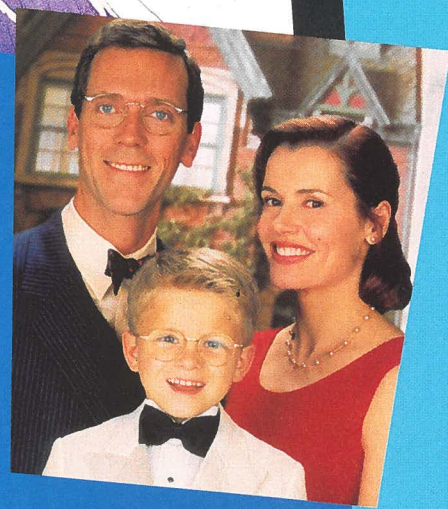
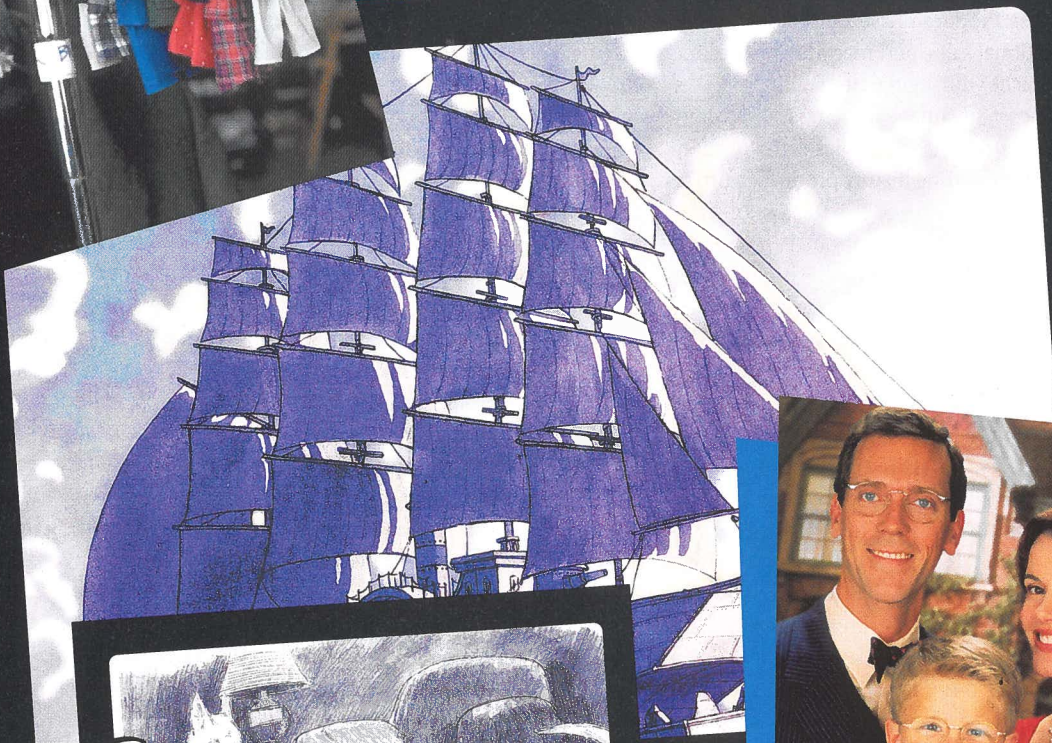
A LITTLE ADVENTURE A BIG OPPORTUNITY



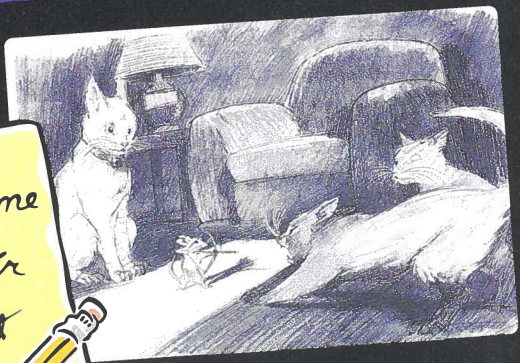
GEORGE
No the kids. I'm too little for a race
like that.

STUART
Little? You're not little. Not to me.

GEORGE
You've never seen one of these races
Stuart. There're hundreds of them
there. Everybody from
(has to say)
What if s



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1999

Programming for the cubs

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Natural history producers are looking to children's programming as a possible outlet ...and it isn't just another case of genre-bending gone wild.

One of the advantages of wildlife programming is its ability to leave its natural habitat and cross both geographical and demographic borders. Producers have long enjoyed strong international sales, and many are discovering a new niche with younger audiences.

The cost advantage of being able to draw on dormant footage libraries is the primary reason why natural history producers turn to kids programming. While an average wildlife program costs about US\$600,000 per hour, kids programs can be produced for half that by taking advantage of libraries. However, stock is just the beginning. For kids, entertainment is required, and that means creating a hook.

Two of the most respected names in natural history, Survival and Partridge Films (now United Wildlife), have been producing eyeball-catching children's programming since the early '90s. *Amazing Animals*, an Emmy-nominated Partridge co-production with London's Dorling Kindersley that's now entering its fourth season, features a computer-generated 3-D lizard named Henry, an off-camera narrator, as well as stock and original footage. Along with numerous international outlets, the series enjoys a daily slot on the Disney Channel.

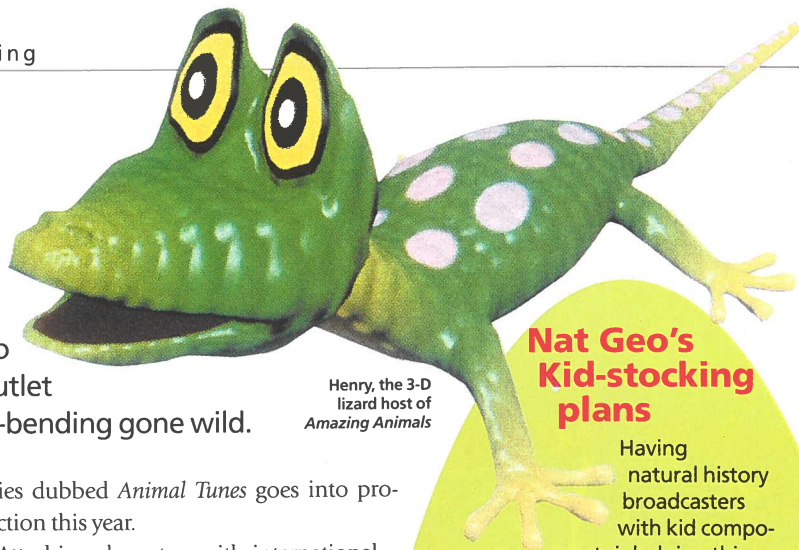
In July, Partridge wrapped a 26 x three-minute series called *Animal Alphabet* with the DK alumni that formed Adams Wooding Television. Each episode features an animal-/alphabet-themed original song, and can be adapted for eight different language and cultures, and has been sold to Channel 4 (U.K.), La Cinquieme (France), RTE (Ireland), TV12 (Singapore), VPRO (Netherlands), Canal 11 (Mexico), Centauro (Columbia), FETV (Panama) and VGI (Africa). Pay TV deals have also been signed with Disney Channel in Germany, France, Italy and Spain, with Nickelodeon in the U.K. and with Discovery Channel for Latin America. An 80 x three-minute follow-up

series dubbed *Animal Tunes* goes into production this year.

Attaching characters with international recognition can also attract kid eyeballs, a fact that Survival learned in working with Jim Henson Production and Warner Bros. However, most companies retain copyrights in a co-production, so their partners can expect smaller returns and few merchandising rights. In 1994, Survival began a co-production with Henson called *The Animal Show*, a talk show in which Muppets discuss events in the natural world, demonstrated by stock footage. To date, 65 episodes have been produced, and talks are on for more. Survival also produced five one-hour segments with WB called *The World of ... With Bugs Bunny*, a series that mixes Looney Tunes characters with Survival library footage.

Cambium Releasing, active in both documentary and kids fiction production circles, combines its content expertise strengths in *Infosaurus*. Leaning heavily on the draw of CGI animation, the 26 x one-minute 3-D toon series explores the ancient dinosaur world with the help of a lizard tour guide named Maxi.

As to tailoring doc content for kid viewers, Andrew Buchanan, head of development at United Wildlife, who worked on *Animal Alphabet*, cautions against hitting kids over the head with environmental messages; the approach has to be subtle. He offers the 'E is for Elephant' song from the series as an example. "You can begin to introduce the idea that tusks belong attached to elephants. We don't talk about poaching. We don't talk about ivory. . . You can have them sing along without them realizing that they're getting a message."



Henry, the 3-D lizard host of *Amazing Animals*

Nat Geo's Kid-stocking plans

Having natural history broadcasters with kid components is helping this production genre grow.

The juxtaposition of doc stock and kid-entertainment hooks is very much the direction National Geographic Television likes to take. As an example of its development strategy, *Sea Trek* is a series set in Zooie's aquarium; she can enter the fish bowl, its characters come to life and she navigates an underwater world. This entails CG animation, stock and a live-action wrap.

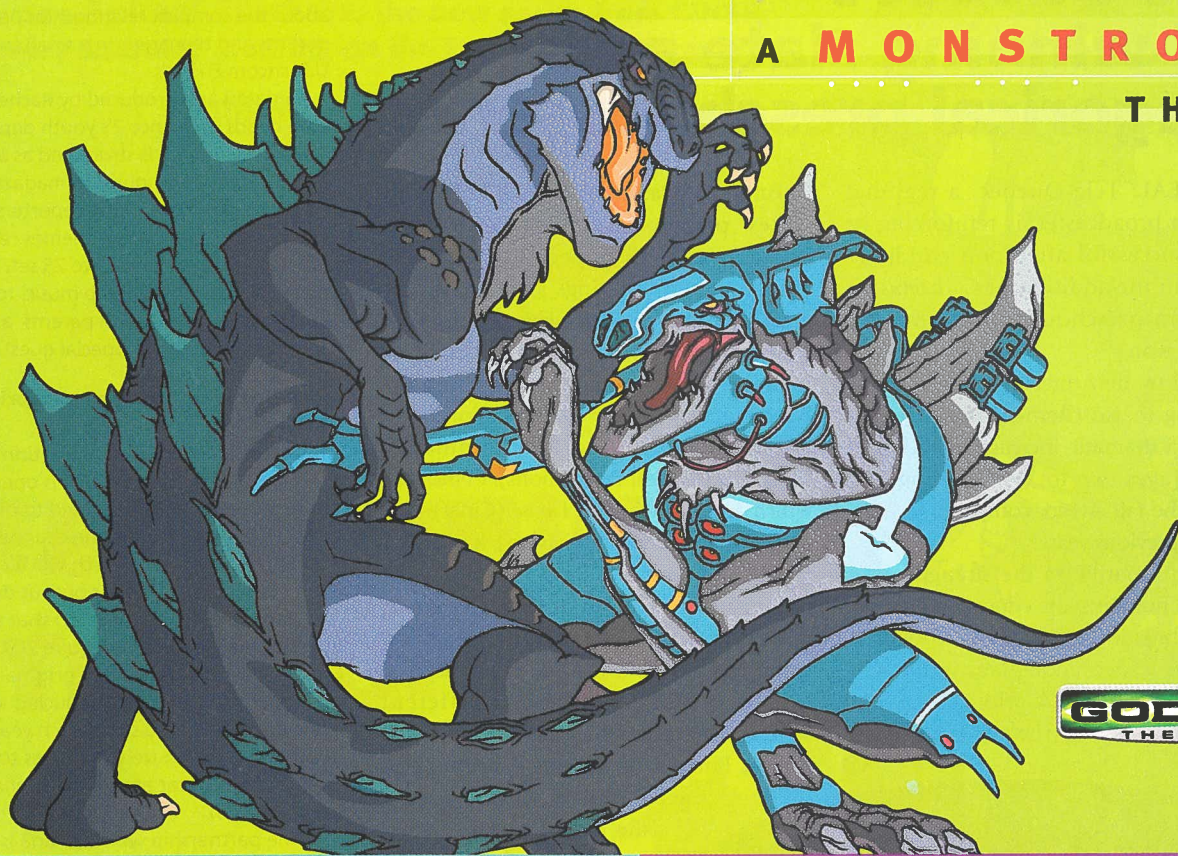
As to costs of these kinds of series, the doc-caster aims to keep things under US\$200,000 per episode, and prefers to find partnering scenarios.

Erika Markman, formerly VP of business development, children's programming, now heading up the new National Geographic Education division, says its *Really Wild Animals* series and special (originally launched via home video), which took library footage and added a kid navigation mechanism, was successful, and that this year, Nat Geo plans to build *Amazing Planet*—three aliens exploring our world via a mixture of minidocs and slapstick—into 26 episodes. *Tales From the Wild* is another property that's going beyond its initial six-pack, with seven more episodes on tap. The series takes a first-person narrative approach as a young animal diarizes its life in the wild, and uses existing footage from shows. As to the doc-component, Markman says "There is no lip flap, this is just bringing documentary to kids."

As to likely pitches, Nat Geo is interested in adventure with an educational component, with a preponderance even for some literary properties—think the likes of Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons*. Anne Dickerson, the new director of program development, describes the slant as "outside adventures, kids doing their own exploring," and mentions George Jean Craighead's *Julie of the Wolf* as another example of the Nat Geo kids direction. **MM**

B I G O P P O R T U N I T I E S

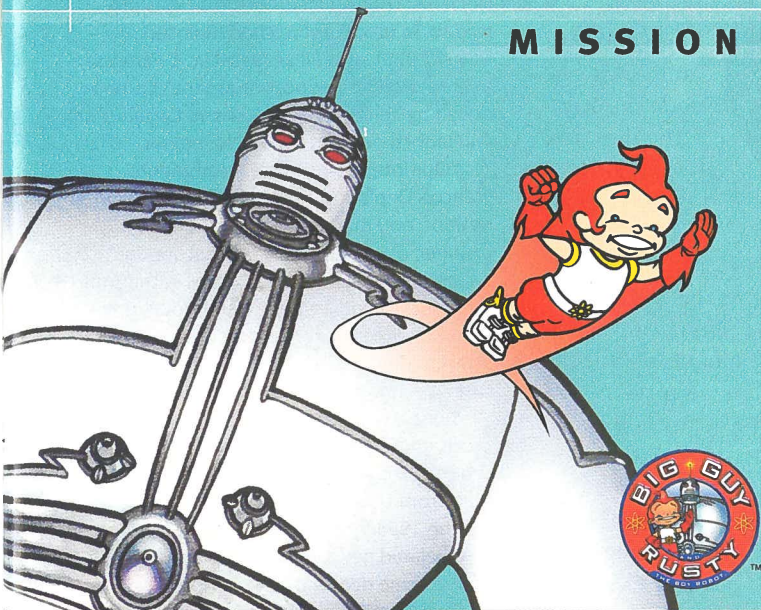
A M O N S T R O U S T H R I L L



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Télé-Quebec's kid-winning slate adds allegorical preschool series

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MONTREAL: Télé-Quebec, a regional Canadian broadcaster, is reinforcing its already successful afternoon children's block with the addition of *Cornemuse*, a live-action preschool series produced by Téléfiction.

Guided by new director-general of programming Mario Clement, Télé-Quebec has seen a dramatic increase in children's viewing (ages two to 11), winning a 10 share in the fall sweep, compared to a 2.5 share the previous year.

Based primarily on the strength of its preschool numbers, the educational/cultural public broadcaster says it's now the market ratings leader among kids in the 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. block, with 21% of overall children's viewing. The network operates

Carmen Bourassa. The 65 x half-hour series premiered last month, and Bourassa says it's hoped that the show will emulate the ratings standard set by preschool phenom *Teletubbies*.

The network's 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. block includes the Canadian tween series *The Adventures of Shirley Holmes* (Forefront Entertainment/Credo Entertainment), *Teletubbies* (Ragdoll Productions), *Cornemuse*, which replaces *Wimzie's House* (Cinar), and *Macaroni tout garni* (Publvision), a series for five- to seven-year-olds.

Cornemuse is about a dog/veterinarian who encourages kids to sing, play and learn, but the real stars are four pint-sized four-year-olds, each from a different species. Characters include Tibor the shy

Tiger, Kounga the naughty Kangaroo, Rafi the benevolent Raccoon, Bagou the teasing Monkey—and

then there's Zozo, a sympathetic little bird who sometimes transforms into an animated cartoon character.

The show has 11 screenwriters, and is the original idea of Michelle

Gascon, Paule Marier, Nicole Lavigne, the late Michele

Poirier and Bourassa. Bourassa, Claude Veillet and Jacques Bonin are producing. So far 57 episodes are wrapped, with eight more slated to go in February. Montreal's PMT Video is producing the animation sequences.

Cornemuse is produced on a tight budget of US\$2.5 million, with funding from Téléfilm Canada, the Canadian Television Fund and exporter Téléfiction Distribution and Marketing. Téléfiction is also the producer of *Pin-Pon*, a top-rated preschool series set in a fire station that's licensed by French-track specialty channel, Canal Famille.



Cornemuse

on an annual budget of roughly US\$46.2 million, including a US\$35 million appropriation from the Quebec government.

Télé-Quebec hopes the new *Cornemuse* series will approximate the success of *Passé-Partout*, a show the pubcaster produced in-house almost a decade ago, which has since become Quebec's most popular kids series of all time.

Cornemuse features a cast of engaging baby animals and their families, and aims to develop self-esteem in preschoolers, says veteran children's producer

Teens continued from page 19

In the Wednesday slot, *Rince ta Baignoire* is being broadcast between *Tides of Life*, a French series (produced by Télémages) about the complex relationships between parents and teenagers in a small town, and U.S. sitcom *Friends*.

Initiated and produced by Rachel Kahn, who heads up France 2's youth department, *Rince ta Baignoire* is structured as a fresh and dynamic half-hour info magazine hosted by a team of six young reporters. Each week, it explores various themes relating to life and culture of the 15 to 25 set. Matters dealt with range from rap music, to drug use, to life at home with parents, and each show has at least one special guest, generally from the music scene.

Pick-ups from Nelvana pad prime-time Teletoon teen opening

Teletoon France, the all-animation kids channel transmitted on TPS, is opening up a new prime-time slot targeted to older teens in the next six months. The channel picked up *Bob & Margaret*, which will air in the slot, through a multiyear output deal with Nelvana (effective January 1) that stipulates Teletoon will annually acquire 200 half-hours (about 10 series) of original Nelvana product, as well as co-producing at least one 26 x 26-minute series each year. Among younger-skewing Nelvana series to air on Teletoon this year are *Dumb Bunnies*, *Birdz* and *Franklin*.

The partnership with Nelvana is a natural progression; the two companies have paired up in the past to produce series like *Flying Rhino Junior High*, a co-venture between Nelvana, TF1 and Neurones that was pre-sold to Teletoon (which had invested US\$177,000), as well as *Jean-Luc & Faipassa*, a 39 x 40-second educational series co-produced by Teletoon, Nelvana and Canal+ that will launch on Teletoon in November.

"Our interest is double," comments François Deplanck, Teletoon's GM. "As competition and market segmentation are tougher, our first priority is to secure the acquisition of exclusive programs with output deals for catalog and original productions. Secondly, we look forward to developing and internationally co-producing more original creations and concepts from France."

Since its launch two years ago, Teletoon's programming budget for acquisitions, co-productions and schedule design has doubled from US\$1.8 million to US\$4.1 million for the 1998/99 season.

In related news, Nelvana has signed a first-time volume deal with Buena Vista International Television for the acquisition of programming to be broadcast on Disney Channel in Spain and Italy. Buena Vista will pick up two to four series a year, including *Ned's Newt*, *Franklin*, *Stickin' Around*, *Sam and Max*, *Little Bear*, *Jake and the Kid*, *Birdz* and *Rupert*.

TMS DELIVERS TWO HOT PROPERTIES

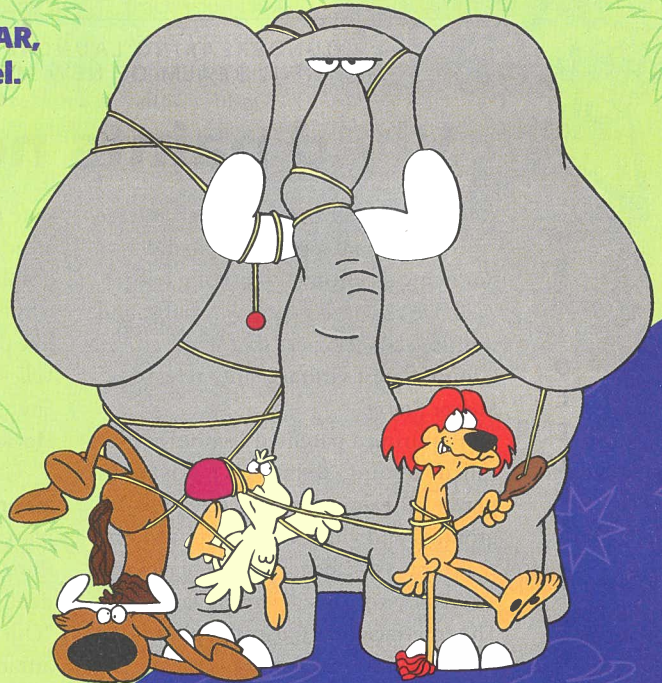
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GROUNDBREAKING LAUNCHES IN THE WEIRD AND WONDERFUL REALM OF NEW MEDIA OFFERINGS

Vivid paints new interactive landscape

BY
JOCELYN
LONGWORTH

Remember the days when interaction meant a paddle dial and a bouncing electronic Ping-Pong ball? * Well, we've come a long way baby, and nothing says progress like Vivid Group's latest virtual reality release, *Meteor Storm*.

Featuring a patented technology called Gesture Xtreme (GX), this multi-player VR game uses blue screen backgrounds and video cameras to project a real-time 3-D image of each player into a digitally contrived gaming landscape. The interface that tracks the players' motions is so fast that movements between reality and the on-screen environment are simultaneous and flawlessly smooth. Up to six players try to block and intercept flying space rocks as an intense meteor shower hurtles towards earth.

Released this month, *Meteor Storm* sports a hefty price tag of roughly US\$15,000 with average additional fees of between US\$12,000 to US\$19,000 for custom-made hardware.

Designed for sci-

ence centers, museums and trade expos (comprising 60% of Vivid's business), as well as arcades (a growing client sector that currently makes up 20%), the new game joins a stable of over 400 VR units that Toronto's Vivid Group has developed since its inception in 1986. The company's

slate includes titles like *SharkBait* (an arcade-ish game in which players tickle dolphins and collect starfish for points, while avoiding sharks and electric eels like the plague), *Soccer GX*, *Virtual Volleyball* and a hockey-based unit called *ShutOut* that's featured in Toronto's Hockey Hall of Fame.

GX systems have the marked advantage of not requiring players to hold or wear anything. Says Vivid Group president Vincent John Vincent: "Our games are the perfect attraction for public venues—you can move thousands of people through, kids can go crazy with a lot of interactive visuals and sound, but nothing gets broken and there's no headgear or handheld equipment to clean." GX units can be found at Disney's Epcot Center, Smithsonian Institutes, some Discovery theme parks and the Kids Quest chain of arcade entertainment centers.

Later this year, Vivid plans to release a virtual reality PC package for the mass market that will revolutionize the way CD-ROM games are played.

The company is working on developing deals to bundle its US\$49 *TiltGX* software with video cameras that mount on top of computer terminals and retail separately for US\$100 to US\$300. Players of the soccer-based game will initially try to

score goals against a computer opponent by tilting their head to move their on-screen body. But according to Vincent, the game will quickly evolve so that users will be able to compete with

one another via an Internet connection, and as consumers become used to the at-home VR technology, *Tilt GX* will also be modified so that players can stand in front of their terminals to project their whole body into the game.

Speaking of "getting into the game," Vivid is planning to realize that long-



Soccer GX

running console game marketing promise sometime in the year 2000 when it partners with one of the U.S. vid game giants (Nintendo, Sega or Sony PlayStation) to release a VR camera/software bundle that should sell for around US\$150.

The coolness of these new-age play apps aside, Vincent emphatically believes the true test of a technology's mettle lies in its ability to adapt for practical applications outside the interactive gaming world. "It's not enough to just pioneer the technology, you've got to take it as far as you can, as fast as you can, or you'll get left behind."

Vivid has managed to find financially viable niches for GX systems in a number of different arenas, including TV production, physiotherapy and virtual conferencing, a far-out concept that's being touted in high-tech circles as the second coming of the Internet.

With a grant from the venerable



Shark Bait





institution of Industry Canada, Vivid is working in tandem with similar groups in the other G7 nations to construct a broadband server with a mega-modem for projecting live images in real time from several different locations into one 3-D environment. "It's like video conferencing, but on a broadcast TV level. So movements are fluid, and there's no choppy time gap," explains Vincent. "The games are certainly fun to produce, but this application will take communication and interactivity to a whole new plane."

On the tube side of the entertainment biz, Vivid created a US\$250,000 foursome of "virtual game sets" for a bizarre hour-long game show that aired for one season during prime time on Japan's Tokyo Broadcasting Systems (TBS) in October 1996. *Varikin-7* (*Virtual Reality Kinki Kids* 7) showcased a recurring cast of seven Japanese teens who were given point-earning tasks to complete in arcade-like alternate universes designed by Vivid. In one segment, players had to outrun a giant black spider in a Technicolor flower garden setting, all the while singing karaoke at the top of their lungs.

The game show potential of GX was recognized in the TV industry Stateside in 1992 with the premiere of Nickelodeon's daily series *Nick Arcade*. Targeted to kids

ages six to 11, *Arcade* enjoyed a hearty five-year run on Nick before being sold into international syndication. The show, which still airs in Canada on YTV, features a two-story virtual activity gauntlet, courtesy of Vivid, that kids race through to beat the ticking clock.

Vivid games like *ShutOut* and *Gravball*, which require players to bend and stretch their bodies to prevent goal scorage, are also a natural fit for physiotherapy and rehabilitation. Patients, especially wee ones, get bored by the repetitive and mindless manual exercises traditionally used by practitioners of this craft. But throw them into a colorful virtual environment armed with a fun task, and they'll "work out" for hours. A recent U.S. study that tested the effectiveness of using Vivid games in rehab centers showed that some patients recovered as much as 200% faster under the GX regimen.

The impending CD-ROMification of Vivid's title roster starting next year, coupled with the subsequent price drop, will likely result in skyrocketing interest from the educational market. In fact, the company already has a couple of learning games in the bag. *The Science of Oz*, developed in 1997 for Charlotte, North Carolina-based Discovery Place, uses yellow-brick-road backgrounds licensed from Warner Bros. to

teach young kids about primary color mixing (i.e. yellow + blue = green).

Aimed at a teen demo, the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry's *Star Trek Federation Science Transporter Room* enhances spatial conception abilities by asking users to pair abstract objects with their shape-appropriate containers in a licensed *Star Trek* holodeck setting.

According to Vincent, licensed properties attract kid crowds like honey attracts bees— "A licensed name or setting always creates a bigger draw because the public immediately identifies with fame." Because young boys, in particular, tend to idolize sports celebrities, the NBA provided the perfect hero hook for a Vivid hoop game called *Full Court Slam*. Developed for the University of Kentucky's Basketball Hall of Fame last November, players can pound the courts against NBA stars who also happen to be U of K alumni.

* *Pong*, for all you non-geeks



Full Court Slam

Decline continued from page 19

Zarghami notes that it will be difficult to gauge the exact threat of the computer until more detailed leisure time studies with kids have been conducted. To that end, Nick conducts an on-line research program with 150 kids nationwide, gathering information concerning what this techno-savvy group is doing with their time.

Programmers threatened by the encroachment of the computer have been quick to search for ways to incorporate cyberelements in their programming. For example, Disney Channel's Zoog Disney block, airing weekends from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., aims to attract kids by incorporating a strong Web site component, which can be visited simultaneously while viewing the block.

Nickelodeon's short-format program *Natalie's Backseat Adventure*, after introducing kids to the character and her family's cross-country move on-air, allowed kids to log onto the Net and track her journey across several states, as well as "talk" to the character on-line. This "pitch and catch" technique between on-air and on-line allows one medium to "throw" to another, Zarghami says, noting that the program had an unexpectedly high number of on-line hits.

Both Disney Channel and Nickelodeon programmers agree that creating shows with on-line components creates "aggregate viewership," by encouraging kids to spend more time with the network—a brand-building factor increasingly valued by advertisers who buy into a combination TV/magazine/on-line package at Nickelodeon, says Zarghami.

"It's all about the cumulative number of impressions," Zarghami notes. "A lot of leading advertisers are going to start to move in that direction." Hensleigh predicts that a ratings system that takes into account the aggregate time kids spend with a show and its on-line component is not far off.

One tried and true way to combat erosion is to create shows that will break through and generate kid word-of-mouth, which is acknowledged to be one of the most powerful tools in creating a hot kids block.

Breakthrough creative is still perceived as one of the best strategies to win back kid eyeballs. "Disney's One Saturday Morning put Disney back on the [kids TV] map, proving good entertainment will always attract kids," Kurnit concludes. Hensleigh concurs: "I think the solution is always going to be characters and stories that audiences can relate to."

The Cyber Space

BY GREG SKINNER

By and large, the movies that come out today are totally amazing—they're technological marvels with awe-inspiring production, presentation and gimmickry. However, even this untouchably flawless status hasn't stopped the average person from wanting to mess with them. Voila, multipath movies—customizable celluloid (or in this case CD-ROM) that gives you the ability to choose plot direction, character development and a host of possible outcomes. Brilliant.

Multipath movies, as the name implies, contain a variety of different 'paths' that users can choose to modify the progression of events. Because the viewer has input into what actually transpires, there is a fair degree of control over specific outcomes; it's this satisfaction of one's curiosity that makes the multipath so exciting.

This genre of movie has come a long way in the past couple of years; even as recently as a year ago, the multipath movies we tested were dogs, burdened with choppy motion, block-ish characters and a flow of action that resembled grid-lock, rather than interactivity. Regarding 'input into different scenarios' of these dino-movies, let's just say that "limited" was the word that immediately sprang to mind. Well, limited no more! While today's multipath incarnations are still hardly perfect, everything is noticeably more slick.

When it comes to viewer-directed offerings, Brilliant Digital Entertainment (www.multipath.com) is right in the thick of things. This company's content development is currently based on popular films and TV characters like Ace Ventura, Xena and Superman, and is available on CD-ROM and over the Internet. In putting one of the new movies through its paces, we opted for a guaranteed laugh, choosing an Ace Ventura title.

So how do these movies work? You simply pop in the CD, press play and soon enough you're watching an animated Ace in full quirkiness, waltzing across your screen. Scenario options pop up about every couple of minutes or so, letting you choose whether Ace takes the job of manure handler, how he dances through his dialogue or where he finds his clues. Needless to say, if you explored every option, you would be preoccupied for a while. Typically, an episode can last

anywhere between 30 minutes and a couple of hours, depending on how adventurous you choose to be.

The character animation uses polygons to provide a sense of depth. What this means is that the characters aren't two-dimensional or completely smooth, but instead look like they're made of softened cubes. They are however, far more realistic than the animation you see on TV, with life-like facial expressions and mobility. Also worth mentioning are the superb sound effects and 3-D perspectives.

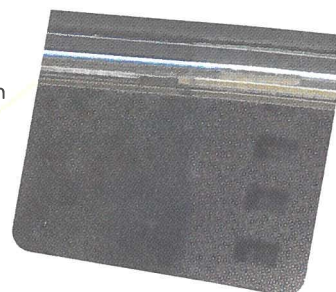
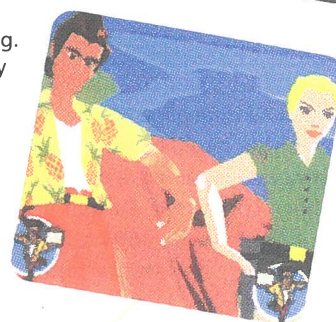
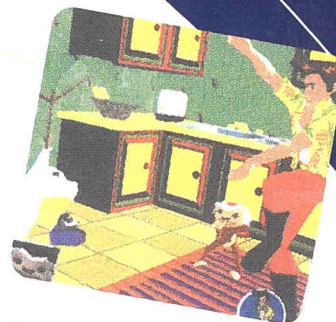
A key component of any multipath offering is the integration of the user's selections—the more seamless, the better. Our utopian visions of the future (video on demand, wrist walkie-talkies and all that) mean that we're a technologically demanding bunch, expecting interactivity of any sort to be super-slick and unnoticeable (in this case meaning absolutely no breaks in the flow of content). The Ace Ventura CD pulls this off marvelously, with zero delay in the action.

In screening a movie with so many options, one might expect to get quite bored wading through them all, but actually the plot development and execution is so well done that you don't. You always feel like a key part of the whole scenario. A save (to desktop) option would be a boon, giving future Spielbergs the ability to revisit their creations for future viewing.

Multipath movies (and the technology behind them) are going to be an important medium in the near future, for content providers and publishers alike. They provide significant flexibility in giving viewers access to alternate views and ways to ingest your content or messages (in everything from full-length features to the shortest interactive advertisements). Brilliant has already formed a joint venture with the rock group KISS that will allow users to interact with 3-D animated images of the band, their voices and some of their recordings as they travel on tour (available this spring), so things are definitely pushing forward.

Being able to take an active role in steering plots and outcomes offers a truly interactive experience. Soon enough, viewers will feel in total control of their multipath experiences, and that is a huge step from where we are now.

Greg Skinner is the director of Mina, a market intelligence company with expertise in the youth market. He also admits to having an unhealthy obsession with the World Wide Web. KidScreen asked him to do some browsing on our behalf and report on the latest developments in new media and how these innovations are having an impact on the kids entertainment industry. He is still at it. If you have any suggestions or ideas for topics you'd like to see in "The Cyber Space," please contact Greg Skinner at 416-504-6800 (phone), 416-504-4054 (fax) or postmaster@minathinks.com (e-mail).



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Fox revs up new properties for toy launches

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Fox Family Worldwide is introducing two new properties at this year's Toy Fair. *Cyber 9*, a 2-D/3-D Fox Kids animated series based on a premise from former Lucasfilm staff, is also in development for fall. The futuristic series features a coming-of-age story, and Bandai America will launch action figures, vehicles and role-playing toys at retail in September.

Following a deal signed with NASCAR last June to develop NASCAR's kid-targeted initiatives, Fox Kids and Saban Entertainment are creating an animated TV series that will launch in the fall. The series will be supported with a toy line from the property's master toy licensee Hasbro. The partners are promoting the property at Toy Fair, but Hasbro will not be showing product. The toys are slated to hit shelves in spring 2000.

The Fox Kids live-action series *Mystic Knights of Tir Na Nog* is beginning a new batch of episodes this month called *Mystic Knights Battle Fury*. The show has also been renewed for a second season, and will be renamed *Mystic Knights Battle Thunder* for the fall. Mystic Knights master toy licensee Bandai America is developing new lines of toys for the property's two new incarnations, which will launch simultaneously with the series. McDonald's is on board for a Happy Meal

promotion in May, and Campbell's will offer 10 million cans of Spaghettios with Mystic Knights-shaped pasta at the end of this month and throughout spring. Fox Video will also be releasing a Mystic Knights home video feature this spring.

The *Power Rangers* TV series, in its sixth season, is also getting a facelift this month, to be known as *Power Rangers Lost Galaxy*.

"This annual evolution of the show has proven to be a strategy that really works," says Elie Dekel, executive VP of consumer products at Fox Family Worldwide. "It revitalizes the product at retail [and] the show on television." The new storyline allows Power Rangers master toy licensee Bandai America to bring out a new line of toys, which debut at FAO Schwarz in New York City on February 9. The property will be supported by the Toy Fair launch of an inflatable balloon tour of Wal-Mart stores in more than 30 North American markets. A national sweepstakes on Fox Kids in February will offer one kid a balloon galaxy party in his or her hometown. *Power Rangers* will also be celebrating its 300th episode this month.

In other Bandai America-related Toy Fair news, the company will be introducing *Dinozaurs*, an original direct-to-video series from sister company Sunrise in Japan. The series debuted in Japan over the holiday season, and Bandai will be

distributing the videos and toys at retail in September. Bandai is also growing in the videogame biz, with four to six titles for Sony PlayStation and Sega Dreamcast slated for each year. Bandai is also still distributing the Yomega yo-yo line.

Viacom's magic at Toy Fair



Viacom Consumer Products showcasing three properties at Toy Fair, according to Jeanne Redlin, director of marketing, but the undisputed highlight is the up-for-grabs licensing rights to an animated spin-off of ABC's *Sabrina, The Teenage Witch* series. *Sabrina: The Animated Series*, which will air Saturday mornings on ABC, as well as in UPN's after-school lineup, will

feature Melissa Joan Hart's little sister, Emily, voicing the role of Sabrina. Viacom Consumer Products holds rights to the entire brand, including the live-action series that enters syndication in the fall and continues to rate number one on ABC's TGIF lineup.

Tim Burton's *Sleepy Hollow*, a Paramount feature to be released in the fall, is also being introduced, offering collectible, publishing and other limited lines typical to a niche movie, says Redlin. The licensing program for the film, which will likely be rated "R," targets teens and the 18 to 34 demo.

Mighty Mouse is the third push for Viacom, with a Mighty Millennium merchandising program that highlights sports lines like apparel, a kids energy drink and a soccer ball. The classic property has enjoyed strong consumer interest since its U.S. parade balloon tour and 1998 NBA player tie-ins. **VR**

Nick prepares to unleash CatDog toys

Nickelodeon and its master toy licensee, Mattel, is introducing CatDog toys at Toy Fair. The Mattel line includes pull and pose plush CatDog, a CatDog Adventures play set with the fish and bone house and a talking feature doll with both voices.



Blue's Clues master toy licensee Tyco Preschool is growing its preschool series-based line with new product this year, including a plush Goodnight Blue and a Bath Time Blue. Eden will also refresh its line, adding characters like Tickety Tock and Mailbox, a finger puppet theater and Singing Steve with Blue in a

Thinking Chair package. A *Blue's Big Treasure Hunt* prime-time special will air on Nick in March, and Tyco will offer a plush Treasure Hunt Blue.

For the *Rugrats*, Mattel is unveiling a *Rugrats Makeup Angelica*, a Tommy's Reptar Toss game, a *Rugrats Bedtime Dil*, *Rugrats* action plush of Tommy, Chuckie, Angelica and Spike that can walk on their own, and play sets such as Chuckie in the playground, Angelica at the pool, Tommy and Grandpa in the Pickles camper and all of the *Rugrats* in the first Pickles house. Dil, born in *The Rugrats Movie* last November, began to appear in the TV series last month. *The Rugrats Movie* will launch on home video on March 30, and a *Rugrats* direct-to-video title will be released in the summer. **AH**

Power Rangers
action figures
to get annual
facelift for
Toy Fair

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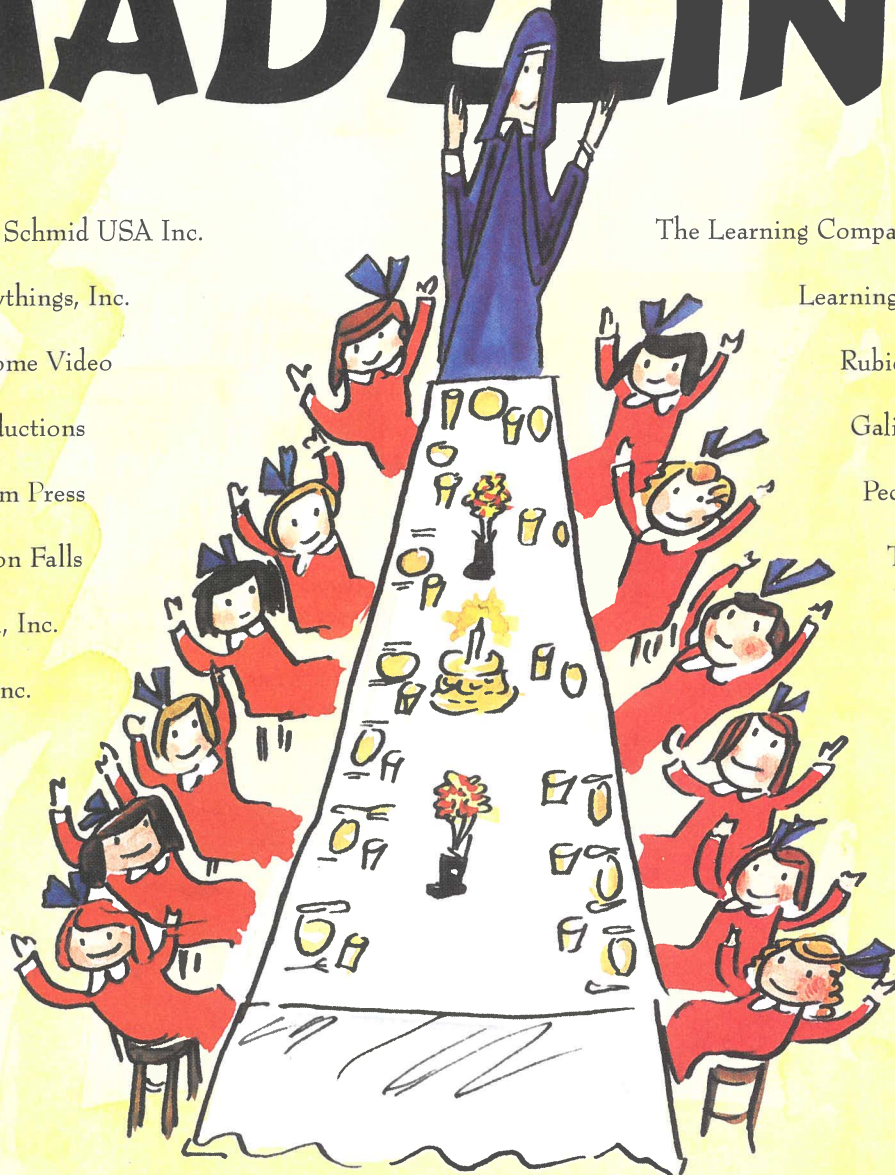
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NHL gets back to Roots

The National Hockey League has inked a three-year licensing and retail agreement with Toronto, Canada-based clothing store and manufacturer, Roots. The deal will allow Roots to create and market a range of apparel (including lifestyle activewear, gloves and scarves, footwear and luggage) that incorporates the logos and heritage marks of current NHL clubs. Sizes for apparel will be available for kids ages zero to six, and eight to 18. The first wave of product will commemorate the opening of the Toronto Maple Leafs' new arena, the Air Canada Center, and will be available at Canadian Roots locations beginning this month. Clothing lines for the remaining five Canadian clubs will hit Roots stores in the fall, with merch for the U.S.-based teams to follow in the first half of this year.

New toy deal for Cinar, Learning Curve

Montreal's Cinar and Chicago-based children's play and learning product manufacturer Learning Curve International have announced a licensing agreement for a line of *Wimzie's House*-based wooden preschool toys. The merchandising agreement's product range includes puzzles, games, felt play sets, foam, activity kits, felt-based interactive storybooks and travel sets. The first items are slated to ship to retailers by the third quarter of 1999, and will be introduced at Toy Fair this month. *Wimzie's House*'s growing family of licensees now includes Eden (also for toys), Simon & Schuster Interactive, Sony Wonder (for home videos and music), as well as two U.S. subsidiary operations owned by Cinar—Carson-Dellosa Publishing and HighReach Learning. Currently in its second season in the PBS Ready to Learn programming block, *Wimzie's House* was rated third, after *Arthur* and *Barney*, among all PBS children's programs in 1998. LRB



Link embarks on licensing push for Noah's Island

U.K.-based Link Licensing has put out the licensing call for the EBU co-production *Noah's Island*. Link is coordinating the U.K. program, with a focus on finding licensees to fill the categories of books, apparel and bed linens. Current U.K. licensees include Martin Yaffe (figurines, plush) and Redan (comic books). Link is ratcheting up its licensing campaign to coincide with the first U.K. home video release of the preschool program from Warner Home Video, which secured the worldwide video rights to series one and two last June. In addition, Link is coordinating the licensing efforts of its subagents in each of the 18 countries in continental Europe in which the show airs. To date, ITEL, which controls the international distribution rights to the show, has sold series one and two of *Noah's Island* to 36 countries. Last November, the EBU commissioned prodco Telemagination to begin work on series three of the program. The first of those 13 x 25-minute episodes will begin airing on BBC 1 in the fall. SA

ReBoot Redux

Vancouver, Canada-based Mainframe

Entertainment, in association with Toronto's Alliance Atlantis, is relaunching the U.S. licensing program for the CGI-driven series *ReBoot*. Both companies are hoping to capitalize on the momentum they expect will be generated by *ReBoot*'s return to American television by signing a number of licensees across all major product categories, including toys, apparel and collectibles. Last December, Mainframe, the



show's producer, and Alliance Atlantis, which controls worldwide distribution, inked a two-year broadcast deal with Cartoon Network. In the spring, the kids cabler will begin airing all 39 episodes of the series, plus all of the shows that comprise the third season, which has yet to make it onto U.S. television screens. Originally, season one and two of *ReBoot* ran on ABC from 1994 to 1996, and was later syndicated by Claster Television in 1997. According to Nancy Parkinson-Bassett, director of merchandising and licensing at Alliance Atlantis, both companies plan to develop a worldwide licensing program for *ReBoot* later this year. Two licensees currently on board are Electronic Arts (interactive games) and PolyGram Video (home video). SA



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Noggin brands learning fun

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As more and more digital channels crowd the TV dial, it's getting harder for any one of them to stand out. With this in mind, the creators of kids learning channel Noggin, a joint venture between Nickelodeon and Children's Television Workshop, have been working hard to brand the collection of *Sesame Street*, *Blue's Clues* and *Doug* re-runs as a cohesive package with a distinctive personality for this month's launch.

Big Blue Dot, based in Watertown, Massachusetts, has been involved in the channel's development right from the start. The company helped Noggin GM Tom Ascheim come up with both a mission statement and an attitude for the new channel. "Instead of trying to make education fun, we're going to try to make fun educational," says Ascheim. "We think that's going to give us license to create a brand that kids love and come to, not because they're supposed to, but because they want to."

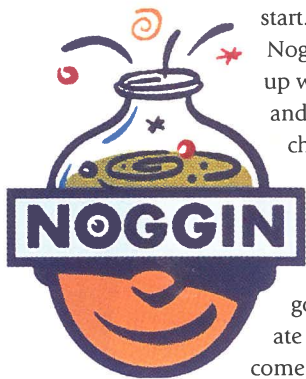
Next, the Noggin team set about developing the brand by creating a logo and slogan that captured the channel's essence. After several dead ends, including a gloved hand

snapping its fingers, the three-part "flexi-logo" (featuring the bottom half of a child's face, a Noggin bar, and over 200 interchangeable tops) was settled on. "The top part always changes in response to the world around it," says Ascheim, "and a lot of what I think we're trying to embody is a place that is responsive to kids, and responsive to the world."

The "What sparks you?" slogan was designed to capture kids' natural curiosity in a way that didn't remind them of school. It's also intended to add to the interactivity of the channel and its accompanying Web site through interstitials showing kids answering that question.

Alisa Shapiro, a producer at Big Blue Dot, says the name, logo and slogan will be used in bumps, bugs, IDs, "next ups," advertising, interstitials and interim original programming ranging from one to five minutes long. In fact, as the only original programming on the channel, the branding will play a key role: Ascheim estimates that branding efforts will occupy at least one-fifth of the total air time.

for more on Noggin see "CTW and Nick put heads together," June 1998, searchable @ www.kidscreen.com



A short history of Noggin

- Winter 1995** Nickelodeon approaches Big Blue Dot about branding a new learning channel. Name and logo chosen.
- February 1996** Nick president Geraldine Laybourne leaves, and project goes on indefinite hold.
- Early 1997** Nick president Herb Scannell resurrects idea in light of new digital channels. Co-venture discussions with CTW begin.
- May 1998** Big Blue Dot re-hired to continue developing logo and add slogan.
- February 1999** Noggin launches.

A & P quick hits

🔊 **Columbia TriStar Home Video** is teaming up with **Crave Entertainment** to launch the first video collection of episodes from *Men in Black: The Series*. Customers who purchase both Crave's new MIB game for Nintendo's color Game Boy and one or more of the three videos will get a US\$5 mail-in rebate. The promotion will be backed by *Nintendo Power* magazine advertising, bursts on the videos, floor and counter retail displays and an on-line sweepstakes starting up when the videos ship in March. Home video packages of previously-aired episodes of *Extreme Ghostbusters* and *Jumanji: The Series* will street the same month.

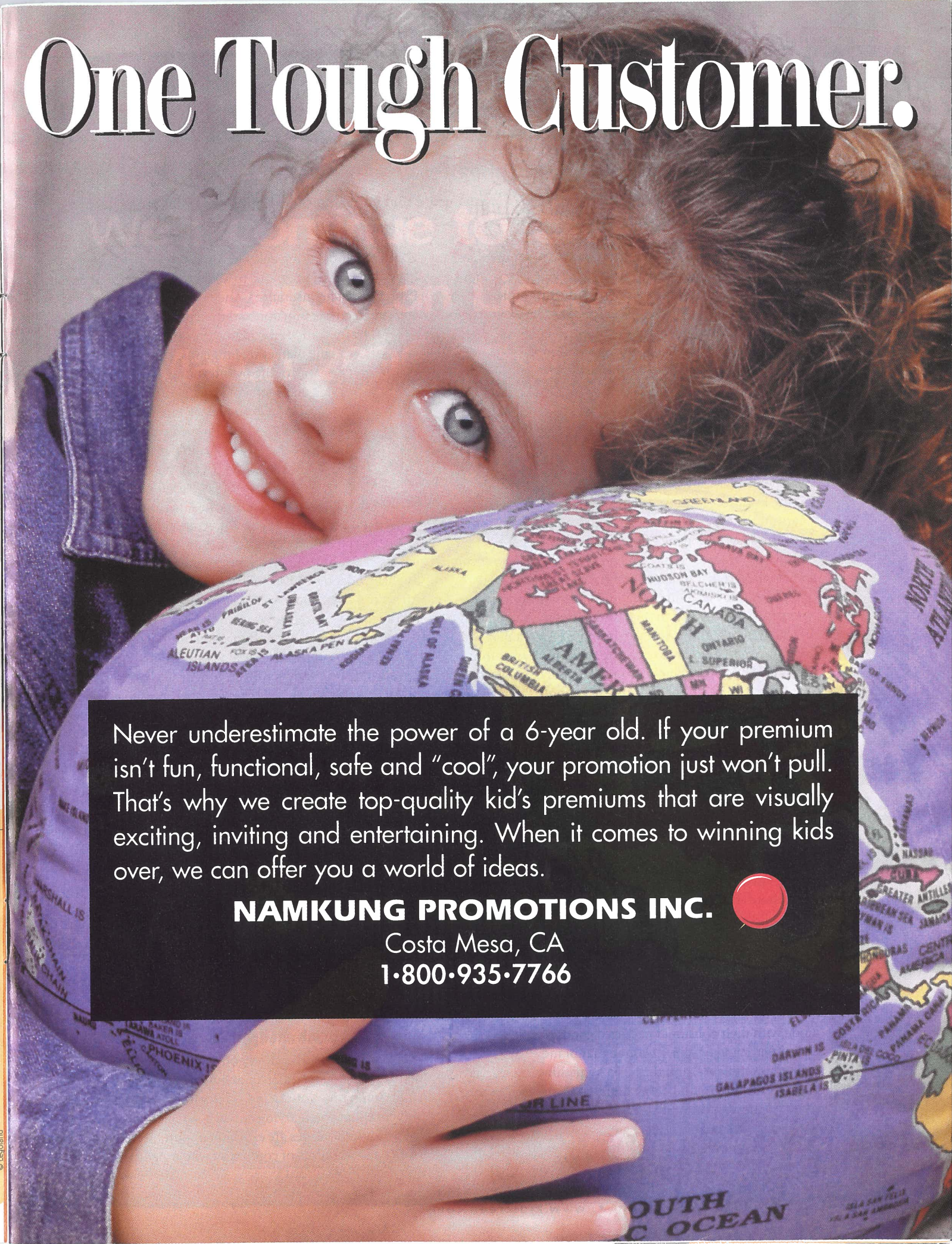
🔊 About 1,800 Canadian classrooms will be tuning into a **Teletoon** in-school curriculum program called "Creative Sparks" this month. The Canadian animation station's four-month program, aimed at grades four to six, includes curriculum ideas for the arts, science & technology and social studies. A writing contest is included, with members of the winning class awarded the opportunity to work with an animation artist to paint their story on a building in their home city.



News in Brief

- 🔊 **The Lego Group** is launching a US\$15-million campaign to push a new Legoland theme park opening March 20 in Southern California. Teaser ads created by Asher & Partners, Los Angeles are currently airing via cable and spot TV. They will be replaced by sequel ads in March, showing kids planting glowing Lego blocks and watching them bloom. The new 128-acre theme park is designed for kids ages two to 12, and will feature 40 rides as well as entire mini-cities and animals made from about 30 million bricks.
- 🔊 **Philip Morris USA** is the first company ever to invest US\$100 million to convince people *not* to buy its product. Three controversial spots from Y&R Advertising, New York tell teens to "Think. Don't smoke," with one featuring a confident girl saying, "I don't need to smoke to prove myself. My coolness is not on trial here." The campaign has been received suspiciously by several U.S. anti-smoking groups, with The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids stating that if the cigarette company was serious about the issue, it would kill off the Marlboro man.

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The ethnic majority?

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Did you know that by the year 2010, more than one-third of the U.S. population will be comprised of what is now termed ethnic minorities, African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, Asian-Americans and Native Americans? Ethnic marketers do. In fact, they're known to throw out even more impressive statistics, like the fact that our ethnic population has the largest household size, and that these households have a greater number of kids (Caucasian - 2.9, African-American - 3.4, Hispanic-American - 3.8, Asian-American - 3.9, American Indian/Eskimo - 3.4). And that's why smart marketers are devising targeted ways to reach this fastest-growing population in the U.S.

Still, when faced with the concept of ethnic marketing, some point to the fact that ethnic minorities are becoming more assimilated into our culture. Why, then, in this more homogeneous society, do we need to single out the ethnic population? Aren't they reachable by marketing to the general population?

Ethnic marketers create ways to zero in on the ethnic population for the same reason that cable channels continue to slice up the pie and create more targeted channels (HBO Family, Toon Disney, BET Jazz, etc.), and for the same reason that *Essence*, *Ebony*, *Latina* and a host of other ethnically targeted media exist and thrive. The key to their success is the idea that everyone is *not* the same, and the successful marketer for the future will find a way to talk to and connect with every segment of their audience in a relevant way.

The influence of the urban ethnic market cannot be understated, especially in the youth market. Think about the most popular kids' music, fashion and language. It's all influenced and shaped by the urban youth market—the "ethnic market." Witness the birth of street marketing in the hip-hop industry, where scores of teens "place" an artist's music in the hands of other teens before it hits the airwaves.

It seems that the kids segment of the entertainment industry (with the exception of music) is still in catch-up mode with their consumer packaged goods counterparts. Consumer marketers have learned that brands can be segmented by audience, and that even something as basic as a box of cereal has to find a way to differentiate itself in the cluttered supermarket aisle.

Several consumer packaged goods companies have devoted resources specifically to the ethnic market (General Mills, Reebok, Nabisco, Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, Hallmark cards and

QSRs like Burger King and McDonald's). Service companies have also created programs to address this (AT&T, American Express, Allstate Insurance). And even when companies have created an ethnic function and then disbanded it, they

learned about the market through research and specific marketing programs, and then made it a way of life by integrating it into their brand management systems.

Recent examples of entertainment companies that have jumped on the bandwagon and are utilizing ethnic marketing strategies for kids titles are Twentieth Century Fox for the video release of *Dr. Doolittle* (the studio

developed a special African-American targeted campaign) and the new animated direct-to-video release *Our Friend Martin*. Other examples include targeted publicity efforts via African-American newspapers for video titles such as Nickelodeon's *Gullah Gullah Island* and HBO's *Happily Ever After Fairy Tales*. Some examples in the Hispanic market include CTW's targeted programs for its *Plaza Sesamo*. Most recently, Nickelodeon announced plans to develop a pilot for a *Rugrats* spin-off TV series that will focus on Susie Carmichael (the show's African-American character).

By way of example, *Tell Me Who I Am*, an animated children's video targeted to the ethnic market and developed by Kid Positive (see "African-American kidvids: from niche distribution paths to head-to-head at retail," page R12 of the October 1998 *KidScreen*, searchable at www.kidscreen.com), effectively reached the target audience by developing a grassroots ethnic marketing campaign. Initially only available through direct marketing, *Tell Me Who I Am* utilized targeted publicity as well as print advertising (*Essence*, *Ebony*), and marketed directly to the African-American community by attending local Black Expo fairs, exhibiting at African-American professional organization conferences and offering the product at venues where African-American parents shop (African-American bookstores). They are now in the process of securing promo partners and sponsors for the retail video release.

So the question becomes...how do you develop an effective ethnic program for the kids market? Here are some key do's and don'ts on how to begin developing programs to effectively reach this growing market:

- **Research your market:** Recognize important characteristics that are similar *and* different about kids within this segment. Understand how your brand is relevant to the specific ethnic audience that you're trying to reach. Nuances like appropriate words and images are *extremely* important to capture. Utilize the resources of companies with experience developing

continued on page 44



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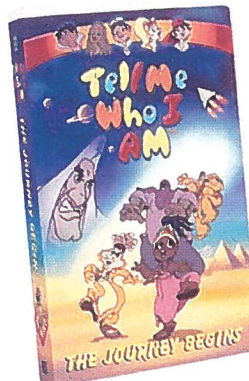
continued from page 42

products specifically for various segments of the ethnic market.

- **Ensure that advertising used speaks to your audience and is culturally relevant:** Use an image that connects with your market. A perfect example of this are the ads used by the Walt Disney Theme Parks in African-American magazines. Photos of guests enjoying the park include all ethnicities and Mickey Mouse is dressed differently. Imagine the surprise and connection African-American families feel when they turn to a page in a magazine and see Mickey dressed in an African Kente cloth outfit.

- **Consider partnership marketing:** Form strategic alliances or cross-promotions with established ethnic product marketers who can lend instant credibility and help establish your product with their customers and create the connection. A simple, yet direct way to accomplish this is through cross-promotional tie-ins in which you offer a premium (video, storybook) in your package.

- **Consider sponsorship at the local level for your product or property through cultural events:** These can include kids' fairs, local dance companies, family events at theme parks, churches, ethnic street festivals, cause-related programs, etc. One example is General Mills's sponsorship of the only



African-American circus, UniverSoul Circus. Another example is Columbia House Record Club's promoting its products at Latin street festivals. Yet another example is the "African-American Women on Tour" conferences co-sponsored by Hallmark, Kellogg's, Mobil Oil and American Airlines.

- **Consider retail-based events developed around key ethnic holidays:** Develop programs around key ethnic holidays like African-American History Month, Cinco de Mayo or Kwanzaa. The idea is to create a program or co-branded promotion with your product and a product that is relevant and ties in with the holiday (videos, greeting cards, books, packaged goods, etc.).

In summary, the use of focused kid efforts is as important in the ethnic market as it is in any other segment. This market is growing by leaps and bounds; when developing your marketing plans, you simply can't afford to leave out this important sector.

Karen Grace-Baker is president of Kid Kulture, an L.A.-based marketing consulting firm specializing in the development of marketing and promotional strategies for the children's market. Previously, she served in executive marketing positions in the children's video and music division at Sony Wonder, and in the kids TV department at The Walt Disney Company. She can be reached on-line at Kidkulture@aol.com

4:2:2 Videographics

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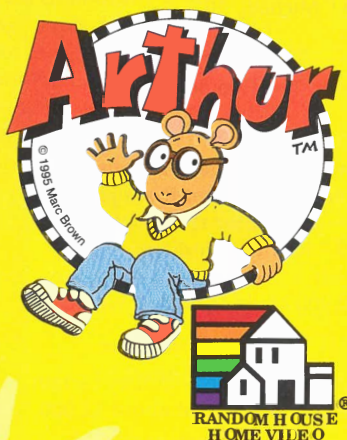
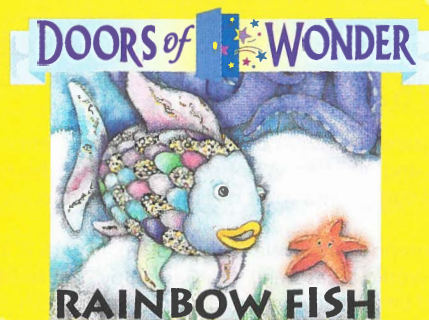
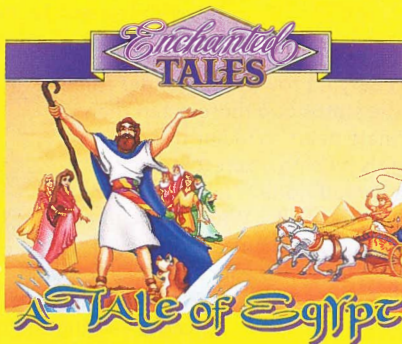
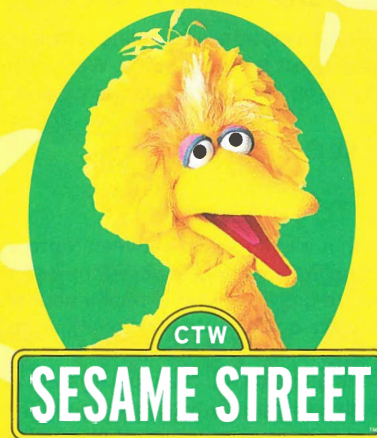
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WHAT TODAY'S KIDS ARE THINKING

Dream toys help with homework, play games and fetch lemonade

This month, LiveWire went on-line to ask kids about their favorite subject—toys. Our panel told us about their faves for 1998 and the best toys of all time. We particularly enjoyed finding out about the gender-specific toy pics of boys and girls—where they differ and share common ground. One major agreement in the favorite toy category? Video games!

What we found:

Best Toys Overall

Although it was a toss-up between Nintendo and Sony PlayStation as the system of choice, video games were voted the best toy of all time by both sexes. An expected girl fave, Barbie, took a back seat to vid games, but hung on to second place on the girls' list. Coming in third were those huggable, lovable and collectible Beanie Babies.

While girls showed the most interest in progressive, high-tech toys, boys tended to identify with retro stuff. The comeback-toy-of-the-year award goes to the yo-yo, our boys' second favorite toy of all time, following video games. Third on their list was the Beast Wars collection of animal/robot transformers.

Yo-Yos make a big come back with boys



Other winners for the Toys '98 survey:

Best new video game: Zelda 64

Favorite character license: Tommy Pickles

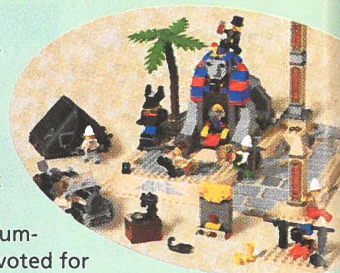
Favorite toy store: Toys 'R' Us

Solo Play

When it comes to defying toy choice gender roles, girls buck the status quo more often than their male peers. A major trend for girls is rising interest in what is traditionally labelled "boy stuff." When asked about their favorite toys for

solo play, a large number of our girls voted for Lego, earning the toy a photo finish second to Barbie.

Boys, however, showed great loyalty to their traditional faves. Nintendo came in first, Lego second, and a variety of action figures third.



Lego a big hit with girls

What kids said:

We asked our panel to invent the perfect toy, complete with all the bells and whistles. We also inquired what this toy masterpiece would cost. Here's what our inventors had to say:

"I would invent a Nintendo 64 traveler. You could play with it like you play with Nintendo 64, only it would be as small as a Game Boy. You could take it with you everywhere. It would be free." Jennifer, 12, Virginia

"I'd make a little box that you could play video games with, and it would also help you with answers to homework questions after you scanned them in. It would cost \$25.99." Michael, 10, New Jersey

"I would invent shoes with springs on the bottoms, used to play basketball with. They would cost \$49.99." Kelsey, 8, North Dakota

"I would invent a computer game made for girls that helps you choose what you want to be when you grow up. You could give it information about yourself, and it would create a character that's just like you. Then you would choose certain jobs—model, doctor, florist, etc.—and see what it would be like. It could give you information about these jobs. It would cost \$29.99." Rachel, 9, Indiana

"I would make a toy that could transform into a spaceship and you could fly in it. It would cost \$6." Jacob, 11, Georgia

"I would invent a robot friend that could play board games with me and obey certain commands like, 'Go get some lemonade' or something. It would cost about \$2,000." Jessica, 11, Louisiana

Next month: LiveWire checks out kidvid faves for beating the winter blahs.

Note: all figures are in U.S. dollars



Kid Think Inc., a youth marketing consulting group, investigates a wide range of issues in kids' lives. Kid Think talks with kids via **LiveWire: Today's Families Online**, a proprietary panel of more than 1,100 on-line families across the United States. Both Kid Think and LiveWire are divisions of **Griffin Bacal**, a New York-based communications agency specializing in the youth and family markets. If you have any questions or subjects you would like Kid Think to cover, call Paul Kurnit at 212-415-2992 or e-mail livewire@gbinc.com.



February 1999 • \$4.95 4

KidScreenTM Retail

About reaching children through entertainment
A Publication of Brunico Communications Inc.

Toy biz uses downtime to strategize

BY MARIAM MESBAH

As memories of the holiday shopping rush fade from the consumer consciousness (although bills may still linger), the 1999 marketing season is in full swing. "It's the first time in the year we get to show off what we have," says Michelle Amis, spokesperson for Toronto, Canada-based Irwin Toys.

"It's pretty tough to be competitive during the rest of the year without getting an early start."

On the surface, this is generally a quiet time for toy retailers, but behind the scenes, both manufacturers and buyers are busy with next season's promotions, albeit tight-lipped about their plans. The last two months have been particularly hectic as toy

see "Toy Biz" on page R3

Mattel merger marks shift in toy biz

It was one merger with a profound effect on two worlds. In December, the world's largest toy company acquired the world's second largest consumer software company, and neither company's market will ever be the same again.

Although Mattel will not confirm future plans for The Learning Company until the merger is finalized in March, there is every indication that the TLC brand will live on. However, analysts predict that the new TLC will be significantly different from the old one, especially when it comes to setting prices.

"It remains to be seen, but the merger suggests that the intense pricing pressure that's been going on in education should ease somewhat," says PC Data's director of research, Roger Lancot. "Mattel is not as promotional as most other publishers because it has an intense brand loyalty. Mattel's products are 'gotta-have' kinds of products for its customers, so there's no need to go to the outrageously steep rebates."

Lancot adds that there has been a flurry of merger activity in the educational software market over the last year, and less competition may mean the end of the net-to-zero rebates offered in 1998. These mergers and acquisitions include TLC's takeover of Brøderbund and Mindscape, as well as the recent acquisition of the software arm of Cendant Corporation by France's Havas. Lancot says this has reduced the number of major players from almost a dozen to five, leaving only Disney, Microsoft, Humongous Entertainment, Havas and TLC in the learning software category.

see "Mattel" on page R2

BY DUNCAN HOOD



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Day Two Chairperson

Rick De Herder, Executive Vice President, e-Mattel

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Viacom nixes Nick stores

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Pickles, Finsters and the rest of the *Rugrats* posse will soon have to find a new home at retail—at least all private label merchandise that incorporates the characters' likenesses will. The same goes for any Nick items the kids cabler produces under its own brand.

The future of the product has been up in the air since December, when parent company Viacom announced plans to shutter all 16 of its Nickelodeon theme stores. Roughly 75% of the stores' product offering was comprised of private-label Nick merchandise, says Susan Duffy, VP of corporate communications at Viacom. However, plans to find alternative distribution for the products once the closures have been completed in June have yet to be finalized.

Even though the Nick stores were making a profit, says Duffy, Viacom decided to close the chain, as well as its Viacom Entertainment Store in Chicago, in order to focus more on its licensing business. Viacom's next step in the purge of retail holdings will be to sell its ownership of Blockbuster Video. Duffy says the company will likely sell 10% to 20% of the video chain through an IPO to be tendered sometime in the first quarter, and will unload the remaining 80% to 90% of the company by the end of the summer.

While Viacom analyst Tom Adams, of Adams Media Research, acknowledges the company's goal to get out of retailing altogether, he believes the decision to nix the

Nick stores was, in part, based on its inability to compete with the Warner Bros. and Disney studio stores.

"It's a scale issue," says Adams. "Whereas Viacom has been able, under Nickelodeon, to create a few characters that lend themselves to merchandising, they don't have anything like the number of characters that Disney and Warner Bros. do. Also, most of Nick's properties were TV-based. It's much more difficult to generate the same buzz at retail for a TV series than it is for a blockbuster movie."

Ironically, the decision came down just as the film side of Nick opportunities took off.

Viacom opened its first Nickelodeon store in the Mall of America (Minneapolis, Minnesota) in December 1997.

"Mattel" continued from page R1

One of the key benefits TLC will reap from hooking up with Mattel is free access to the toy giant's established brands, according to TLC's chairman and CEO, Michael Perik. He noted when the merger was announced that TLC's access to brands such as Fisher-Price, Barbie and Hot Wheels will enable the company to increase its offering of proprietary brands without paying more licensing fees. Lanctot adds that, while TLC will benefit from brand access, Mattel will likewise benefit from TLC's electronic media development expertise. "You could see all of Mattel's products coming with CD-ROMs," he says. "I could see a situation where Mattel might become a kids portal on the Internet some time down the road. There really is no limit to what they could do with the kind of leverage they will have between their own properties and TLC's ability to bring them to market."

For Mattel, the US\$3.8-billion acquisition of TLC is part of a long-term plan to move away from traditional toys, which have suffered declining sales, and move towards interactive toys, which have been taking off. Mattel's chairman and CEO, Jill Barad, estimates that once the merger is finalized, over 30% of the combined earnings of the two companies will come from interactive sales.

The merger was also a major stepping stone in Mattel's plan to move towards circumventing retailers and selling directly to customers. With 14% of TLC's sales (totaling US\$600 million) coming from direct-to-consumer sales before the merger, the acquisition puts Mattel well on its way to meeting Barad's goal of growing direct sales to over US\$1 billion in three years. Barad also notes that with last June's acquisition of Pleasant Company, Mattel has the infrastructure for the move to direct sales. "With Pleasant Company's state-of-the-art systems and warehouse capacity, we now have the ability to handle an additional US\$700 million in direct selling fulfillment," she announced. "To take advantage of this capability, direct-to-consumer catalogs for all of our brands will begin in 1999, with e-commerce ready for Internet transaction for all of them as well."

Barad adds that the acquisition has given Mattel long-coveted access to the specialty toy market, thanks to TLC's established distribution network, which includes such retailers as Noodle Kidoodle and Zany Brainy.

More than just another merger, it seems the union of Mattel and TLC is another indicator that the future of the toy business, in general, lies increasingly in the realm of electronics and new media. Over the past year, Hasbro, the world's second largest toy company, has acquired the MicroProse software company, the Atari Video Game division of JTS Corporation and Tiger Electronics. As of press time, Hasbro also plans to acquire the games unit of Monarch Services.

Hot kid flicks get into video

•After a disappointing theatrical release last Thanksgiving, *Babe: Pig in the City* is ready to try to bring home the bacon at sell-through. On May 4, Universal Studios Home Video will release VHS (US\$22.98, SRP) and DVD (US\$29.98, SRP) versions of the talking pig sequel. So far, Aunt Jemima Frozen Breakfast Products (frozen breakfast products), The Jel Sert Company (fruit drinks, popsicles) and Sound Source (educational software) have signed on as promotional partners. Universal's ad campaign for the home video release of the movie will cover all major media and is set to kick off on April 18.



•*A Bug's Life* on home video (US\$26.99) and DVD (US\$34.99) is set to swarm retail on April 20. The pre-book date for DVD and video is March 9. Buena Vista Home Entertainment will issue five collectors edition covers of the video, each featuring a character—Flik, Heimlich, Dot, Francis or Hopper—from the Disney/Pixar CGI pic. BHVE is mounting a massive ad campaign for the release, which will extend its feelers into all major media, with an emphasis on print. Promotional partners so far confirmed for *Bug's* are Lever 2000 (soap), Kid Cuisine (frozen foods) and See & Ski Kids (suntan lotion). Other Disney movies heading for sell-through include: *Mighty Joe Young* on March 23, *Brave Little Toaster to the Rescue* in June, a reissue of *Beauty and the Beast* in August, *Madeline: Lost In Paris* on August 3, *Mickey's Once Upon a Christmas Holiday* and two other Christmas-themed titles starring Disney's number one mouse, all to be released in the fall.

Hasbro at bat with ProAction

Hasbro is introducing a line of collectible sports figures and cards based on its adult-targeted Starting Lineup brand to a younger audience at Toy Fair. The ProAction line, aimed at kids ages five to 10, will include 12 baseball figures, 11 hockey figures and 13 football figures in 1999. Like the Starting Lineup products, each figure will be sculpted in the likeness of a well-known sports athlete, and will be bundled with a collector card, but the five-inch figures will be articulated and will have a built-in play feature, such as shooting a slapshot. The Major League Baseball (MLB) figures will be available at retail at the end of this month, the NHL figures in mid-March and the NFL figures in July. The estimated street price ranges from US\$7 for basic figures to US\$10 for deluxe figures.

As the master toy licensee for the NHL and the NFL, Hasbro receives cooperation from the leagues in partnering with their other licensees and participating in major promotions. Hasbro will be part of an NHL promotion with Wendy's running from February 15 to March 26, and is planning a national consumer promotion and retail efforts for the NFL line in the fall. The company will also be

teaming up with MLB to promote the line through its youth marketing initiatives. TV advertising from Hasbro will also support ProAction.

Lisa MacEachen, director of marketing at Cincinnati,

"Toy Biz"

continued from page R1 makers have been preparing their wares for the Canadian, Hong Kong and New York International Toy Fairs, which give both buyers and sellers a head start in bringing their promotional campaigns in line with market trends.

That being said, exactly what are buyers expecting to find this year?

"One of the major things we look for is innovation and newness," says David Niggli, executive VP of merchandising at FAO Schwarz in New York. "We sell classic toys, but different and creative toys are generally the items that attract a lot of attention during the season."

One major holiday season trend that's held its own is the demand for computerized games and toys that talk (or learn to talk, as in the case of Furby). Manufacturers have further leveraged the technology by combining it with classic brands, a trend that industry experts say will continue this season. Last season for example, California-based Mattel sold a Hot Wheels Cyber Racer in response to a more sophisticated market.

Movie tie-ins will once again be high on the list for buyers. The 1999 release of the new Star Wars film, *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace*, for instance, promises to draw young and old alike to theaters and toy stores, says Ron Crane, a senior buyer with Canadian department store, Zellers. "We knew Star Wars items would be hot sellers before ever seeing them," he says. "We'll also see other futuristic toys or items that have millennium tie-ins."

Canada's Irwin Toys is ready for the coming century. The toy maker's "Me and the Millennium" kit is set to hit the shelves early this year. As part of its Kids Can craft line, the package contains a year 2000 scrapbook that kids can fill with memorabilia, as well as a storybook offering information and interesting facts about the turn of the century.

Mattel also has "special items planned" that tie in to the end of the century fuss.

Ohio-based Hasbro Toy Group, estimates the total value of TV ads and promotions behind the line in 1999 will be between US\$5 million and US\$7 million.

Mattel expands Pooh

Fresh from the 100 Acre Wood, Wigglin' for Honey Pooh is one of five 1999 additions to Mattel's Winnie the Pooh line. Complete with corduroy overalls and ears that wiggle when he's fed honey, the new Pooh's several-phrase vocabulary includes, "There's a rumble in my tummy." Aimed at all ages, the plush streets in May with an approximate retail price of US\$35.

Other new Pooh line toys include the toddler-targeted Take Along Blocktivity Center for kids 12 months and up, which arrived last December with a suggested price of US\$20; Sing 'N Giggle plush for Pooh, Piglet and Tigger, which arrived January with an estimated price tag of US\$20 each; the Growing Fun Mobile & Floor Toy, aimed at infants and hitting the streets for roughly US\$30 in June; and the preschool Words and Sound Abound interactive See 'N Say learning book for kids 18 months and up, slated for August arrival with a suggested price of US\$30.



Teletubbies go high-tech

Thanks to a new licensing agreement between the itsy bitsy Entertainment Company and Microsoft, ActiMates based on Teletubbies Laa-Laa and Po are streeting in March, with Tinky Winky and Dipsy joining the group this August. The toys are aimed at kids ages one and up, and have similar capabilities to previous ActiMates, including responding to touch and interacting with Ragdoll Productions' PBS series and PBS Kids' home videos using the separately sold TV Pack. Price points had yet to be set at press time.

Barney toys: the next generation

More than 10 years have passed since the purple dinosaur first asked kids to come play with him, and the Barney merchandise just keeps on coming. This month's Toy Fair will see Hasbro introduce a 1999 line of all-new Barney products. In the spring, Play Along Barney, billed as "the most technologically advanced product in its price range," stomps out with a US\$27.99 approximate retail price to greet kids ages 12 months and up, and Barney Pop-Up Stacker, for kids 18 months and up, hits shelves at US\$7.99. Streeting in the fall, Sing 'N Strum Barney, also targeted at kids 18 months and up, debuts with a US\$39.99 estimated price, Barney Song Magic Bongos beat for the 2 and up crowd for roughly US\$24.99, and Barney Poppin' Surprise Treehouse lowers its ladder for kids 9 months and up with a US\$12.99 price tag.



New Releases

Tarzan of the Apes

Prebook Date: February 18

Release Date: March 9

Price: US\$9.98

Studio: Sony Wonder

Synopsis: Part of Sony Wonder's "Enchanted Tales" series, this animated musical pic based on the original Tarzan stories by Edgar Rice Burroughs follows the king of the jungle as he struggles to find his place in civilized society.

Advertising: TV and radio spots in major markets.

Promotional Partners: Sony Wonder is offering coupon booklets with discounts from Just Born Candies, Carnival Cruise Lines, Golden Books, Kindercare, Toy Biz, Best Personalized Books, Playhut, Brøderbund

Retail: POP displays

Bear in the Big Blue House Volumes 5 & 6

Release Date: March 2

Price: TBA

Studio: The Jim Henson Company

Distributor: Columbia TriStar Home Video

Synopsis: The third home video release for *Bear*, which airs daily as a half-hour program for preschoolers in the U.S. on The Disney Channel. Each tape has a running time of 50 minutes and contains two episodes. Volume 5 features "A Wagon of a Different Color" and "Shape of Bear"; Volume 6 has "Picture of Health" and "Magic Kitchen."

Advertising: trailers on other CTHV family releases.

Promotional Partners: Disney Channel, *Bear* Mall promotion to run in 10 U.S. cities

You're Invited to Mary-Kate & Ashley's Mall Party and You're Invited to Mary-Kate & Ashley's Costume Party

Release Date: February 23

Price: US\$12.95

Studio: Dualstar Entertainment Group

Distributor: Warner Home Video

Synopsis: Latest two releases in *You're Invited* series finds America's cutest preteens giving their fans a look-see into more areas of their lives. In *Mall Party*, the Olsen twins sing, dance and try on clothes with their friends at the Mall of America, as well as investigating the mall's underground aquarium. Continuing with the anthropological theme, *Costume Party* sees the twins traveling back in time to (what else?) try on the clothes of the past, and to rate the couture of different eras.

Advertising: print (*Nickelodeon*, *Girl's Life*, *Disney Adventures*, *3-2-1 Contact*, *DC Comics*, *Family Fun* and *People*).

Promotions: Mary-Kate & Ashley Sweepstakes; national in-school program, includes airing of both tapes in U.S. schools throughout March and April; beginning in late February, radio stations in major markets will give away Mary-Kate & Ashley Ultimate Gift Packs.

Retail: 18-, 24-, 36- and 48-unit merchandisers.

A Day at Old McDonald's Farm, If We Could Talk to the Animals, I Can Sing Baby Animal Songs!

Release Date: Feb 18

Price: US\$12.98

Studio: Sony Wonder and Together Again Productions

Synopsis: Three sing-along titles (30 minutes each) feature classic kids songs, suitable for preschoolers.

Promotional Partners: Coupon booklets offering discounts on products and services from Just Born Candies, Carnival Cruise Lines, Golden Books, Kindercare, Toy Biz, Best Personalized Books, Playhut, Brøderbund

Retail: 24- and 36-count POP displays

Hard Cash

Release Date: February 9

Price: US\$14.98

Studio: MTV

Distributor: SMV

Synopsis: Terminal dweebs Beavis and Butt-Head return to HV to critique more music videos, in between stints of working at Burger World, drilling for oil in a neighbor's backyard and developing an itch-relieving device called the butt-scratcher. *Hard Cash* contains eight B&B cartoons, including "Hard Sell," "Temporary Insanity," "Beaverly Butt-Billies," "Green Thumbs," "Whiplash," "Inventors," "Yard Sale" and "Baby Sitting." Running Time: 50 minutes.

Advertising: print ads will run in animation magazines starting this month.

Retail: 12-, 24- and 36-count displays.



The Rugrats Movie

Prebook Date: February 23

Release Date: March 30

Price: US\$26.95 (video), US\$29.99 (DVD)

Studio: Nickelodeon Movies

Distributor: Paramount Home Video

Synopsis: Nick's flagship kids show jumps from TV to film, and now hopes to continue its transition coup in video.

Advertising: Print (*TV Guide*, *People*, *Nickelodeon Magazine* and *Woman's Day*) and TV (ABC, CBS, NBC and Nickelodeon).

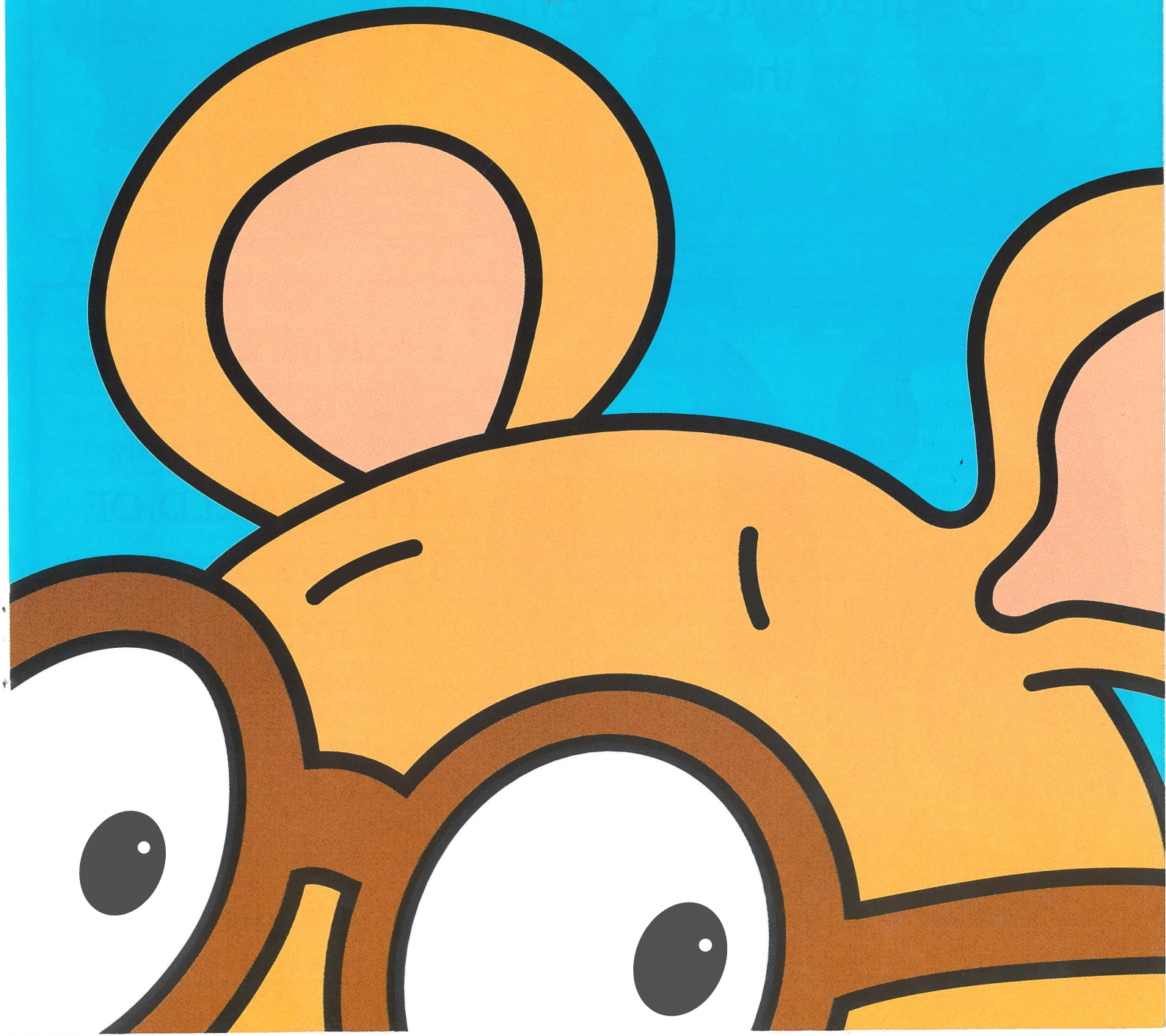
Promotional Partners: Lincoln-Mercury, Campbell's and Mott's; savings booklet containing offers from Oral-B, Simon & Schuster, Brøderbund, Paramount Home Video, Campbell's, *Nickelodeon Magazine* and *Rugrats Comic Adventures*

Retail: Four POP prepack displays—24-, 48- and 96-piece configurations.

ArthurTM

Arthur wishes Eden a very happy 60th birthday!

Marc Brown Studios



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on their
60th Anniversary

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eden® Celebrates 60 Years

By Helga Breier

A lot has changed in children's gift products over the last sixty years. When the Eckstein family brought Eden Toys, Inc. from Europe to the U.S. in 1939, little could they have known that this boutique business of high-end infants gifts would go on to become a leading creator of children's gift products and the licensor of choice for some of the hottest children's entertainment properties of the twentieth century. On the eve of the millennium, Eden president and CEO Richard J. Miller and other senior Eden executives, plus several of the company's key licensors and retail customers, reflect on sixty years of success and share some exciting new directions for the company.

Richard J. Miller acquired Eden Toys in 1965. "During the '60's, you had the advent of the discount store which put the department store in a position where it couldn't profitably compete any longer," Miller says. This created an opportunity to provide product for the department stores that would not be available in the discount stores. "We did that starting in the late '60's and on into the '70's, focusing on the children's apparel division, especially the infants' department," Miller explains.

Eden Toys was managed from 1968 to 1988 by Richard and brother David Miller. In 1973, the company acquired its first license: *Peter Rabbit* and *The Beatrix Potter* Collection. "At the same time, our product line was gradually expanding and our distribution, while remaining focused on quality retailers with quality products, was also expanding. We were becoming a leading resource to the depart-

ment store trade as well as the specialty store trade," Miller says. "We also started to seek out those [children's] properties that could repeat the very positive response we were getting from consumers to the *Beatrix Potter* line." Licenses for *Paddington Bear* and *The Snowman* followed in 1975 and 1986.

In 1988, Eden was acquired by the Penguin Group, a division of Pearson, Plc. The acquisition of licenses for high quality children's literature properties continued, with *Madeline* in 1990, *Goodnight Moon* in 1991, and *Spot* and *Arthur* in 1993.

Recognizing "an opportunity for rapid growth in the marketplace where higher quality children's gifts were being appreciated on a consumer level," Richard J. Miller and family reacquired Eden in 1996. Meanwhile, a trend began to emerge which would dramatically affect the direction of Eden's business. Producers

of children's entertainment began to mine classic literary-based children's properties and develop programming around them - these attractive properties already had intrinsic familiarity and credibility with many parents, as well as core educational qualities. A case in point, the television series *Arthur* debuted on PBS in 1996, becoming Eden's first license with television exposure. As the trend continues, the new *Franklin* series is set to air on Nick Jr. this Spring.

"We were led [into the business of media-based properties] by the change-over in the nature of the *Arthur* property," Miller recounts. "We quickly saw what a tremendous impact the exposure that PBS provided had on the property. This success was noted by everyone in the trade and we went from simply being the licensee of choice for classic book characters to also the



Richard J. Miller



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*Happy 60th Birthday Eden Toys!
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Franklin, Arthur and Madeline

licensee of choice for quality children's programming." Other media-based licenses followed, including, most recently, *Teletubbies* and *Blue's Clues*, while the company's stable of literary characters also continue to grow, with the licenses for the Golden Books properties (including *Pat the Bunny*), *Franklin*, *Max & Ruby* and *Pamela*. Today, Miller says, licensed properties represent over half of Eden's business.

Partners in licensing

A rarity in a business where aggressive sales efforts by licensors can lead to licensed properties becoming over-exposed and quickly forgotten, "Eden is an extraordinary company with long-term vision" says Erica Lindberg Gourd, president of Lindberg Licensing and Promotion. "They do not insist on immediate, quarter to quarter results, but instead they are

for *Arthur* in 1993, they started with just one style [of] *Arthur* [doll]. Since then, they've added a style or two each season, until now they have a broad, extensive line."

Echoing Gourd, M.J. Chisholm, VP licensing and merchandising for DIC Entertainment, says that Eden has been a true partner with DIC in building the *Madeline* property, not only in terms of growing the product line — which she describes as "fantastic and beyond compare" — but also in terms of the marketing and promotional efforts Eden has put behind it. "They have believed in the property from the very beginning and they have supported it every step of the way. They have done a lot of promotional programs with the retailers to keep the property top of mind for both retailers and consumers. They've really approached it very comprehensively," she explains.

willing to take the time to build the brand for the long term." Gourd cites Eden's history with *Arthur* as a case in point: "When they first got the license

Making it work at retail

Having the right product is not enough. Eden also prides itself on its strong relationships with retailers. "We have an established customer base which knows our quality," says Eden VP of product development and marketing, Tracey Tsontakis. For retailer Noodle Kidoodle, that quality is key. "Eden's product line is made up of the high quality, classic type of properties that companies like ours enjoy. They have a very good, basic line, good quality merchandise," states Stanley Greenman, the retailer's CEO and chairman. "Plus, they're used to dealing with the higher end of the specialty stores, not mass market, so they understand our needs more than a lot of vendors."



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Teletubbies

Jane Saltzman, VP of merchandising for internet retailer eToys agrees with Greenman that the quality of Eden's product distinguishes them from other toy companies. "One thing we work hard on in selling product on the internet - because people don't get to actually inspect the product before they buy it - is to make sure that whenever customers receive their merchandise, they love it, and that it looks even better than it did on our site. Their product is just so well-made, that there's never a disappointment factor," she explains.

Eden's products have been sold electronically through eToys since the site launched to

the public in October 1997. Saltzman says that contrary to "land-based retailers", the unlimited shelf space provided by the internet means that eToys can carry almost the entire array of Eden products.

"It really gives consumers who know Eden and like Eden and are familiar with their products a place to go get every one of *Madeline's* outfits, or all of *Arthur's* friends." As a result, "they're definitely one of our top vendors."

Eden's six thousand-plus customers in the U.S. are serviced by a full-time sales force as well as a telemarketing staff dedicated to the specialty business. "The combination of those two selling efforts allows us to very effectively penetrate our existing upstairs marketplace," Tsontakis explains.

And, Eden's partnership approach isn't limited to licensors. For example, Eden's director of marketing Jennifer M. Rossano states that Eden engages in semi-annual and annual planning with key customers. "By planning together with customers, we both maximize

the opportunities that each segment of our product line offers," she says. As well, in partnership with its licensors, Eden provides turnkey promotions, which the independent retailers can easily execute in their stores. An activity kit for *Madeline's* 60th birthday and a *Blue's Clues* Treasure Hunt kit are examples planned for 1999.

An industry in flux

Miller says that the children's gift business has changed significantly over the last few years, with consumers placing an increased emphasis on developmental or educational toys and interactive toy features, even for very young children. As a result, Eden's product mix today is balanced between developmental and interactive gifts — like the Little Lessons line and the Cutie Pies collection of dressable preschool dolls — and the more traditional "love-object" type toys.

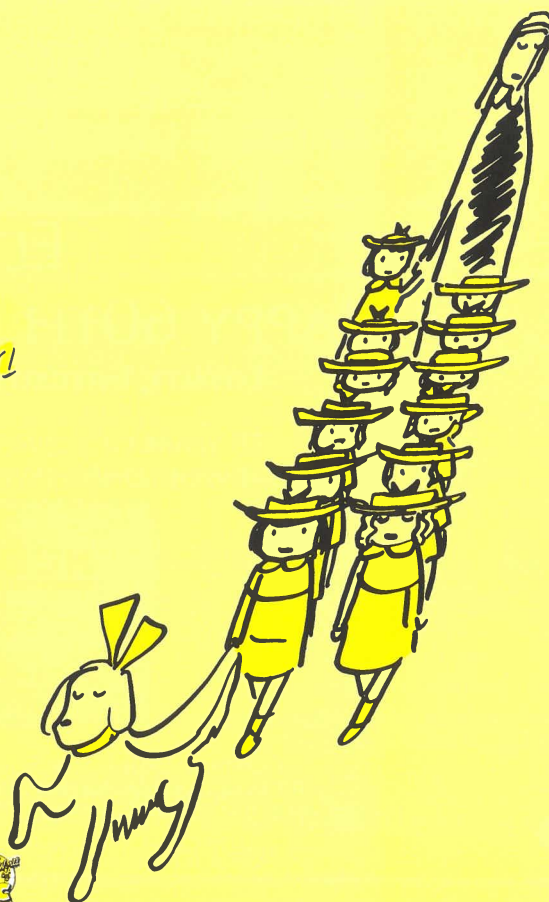
This year, another growth area for Eden is feature toys — toys that sing, move, or play music. "Toys that do more than sit on a shelf are a focus for us going forward," explains Tsontakis. To illustrate, she cites the first talking *Peter Rabbit* toy, who reads his story from

Merci Beaucoup!
Dick Miller and Eden

from

MADELINE™

and your friends at DIC





Seat Belt Strap Buddy
from the *Little Traveler* Collection

Tsontakis adds. "For example, we're coming out with more toys that are targeted towards busy parents — toys that are portable and can attach to strollers or car seats. Practical, functional products are key for us now," she says.

1999 and beyond

Building on the strong momentum of the past few years, big plans are afoot at Eden for 1999 and beyond, including several exciting new licenses, a stronger presence in the children's doll market, and an increased focus on branding.

"The major statement that we're going to be making at Toy Fair is *Wimzie's House*," says Rossano. Eden sees *Wimzie's House* as an espe-

an accompanying book. Look for the talking *Peter Rabbit* at Toy Fair.

"We are always trying to stay on top of current trends, whether it be capitalizing on hot licenses or on features that appeal to today's parents,"

cially contemporary property because it takes places in a home daycare environment, one that may be familiar to a lot of kids. However modern, *Wimzie's House* — with its strong focus on emotional, social skills learning — still clearly meets Eden's criteria for high quality, enduring and educational licenses, she says.

To further build Eden's strong presence in the children's doll market, this year's Toy Fair will also see Eden introduce a line of dolls based on the *Magic Charm* book series, by Elizabeth Koda-Callan. *Magic Charm* is joining *Madeline*, *Pamela* and the newly introduced *Little Lulu*, making a major licensed doll statement for Eden's specialty market. "Our doll product range now spans from pre-birth gifts through the pre-school market, and then after pre-school, there's the school-age child who is playing with *Madeline*. The *Magic Charm* dolls will also be catering to that slightly older child," adds Tsontakis.

The newest Eden license is *Between the Lions*, a reading and writing-focused "multiple media, comedy, variety, puppet, live-action" television show currently being



developed by PBS station

WGBH (Boston) and Sirius Thinking, and set to air in Spring 2000. Along with Mattel, Eden was selected as one of the earliest licensees for the property "because of their ability to translate product into the highest quality 3-D image. And because of their long-term vision and their ability to build a line from something that does not have recognition yet, the way they did with *Arthur*," says licensing agent Erica L. Gourd.

To reinforce the Eden brand, Eden is launching a new website this Spring and a new signature woven Eden label will be introduced on all products, starting this year.

Wimzie's House

© CINAR Films Inc. 1999

Congratulations Eden!



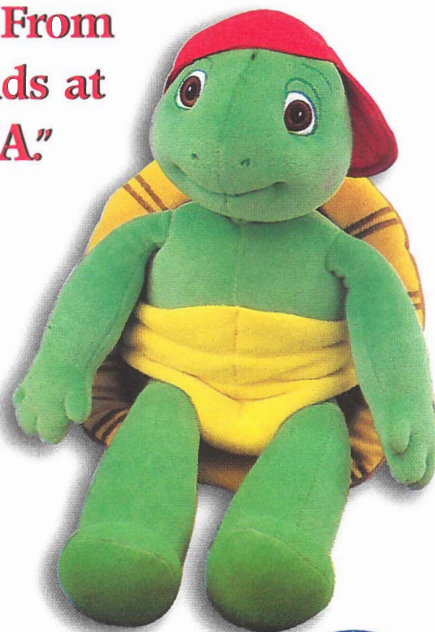
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CONSUMER PRODUCTS

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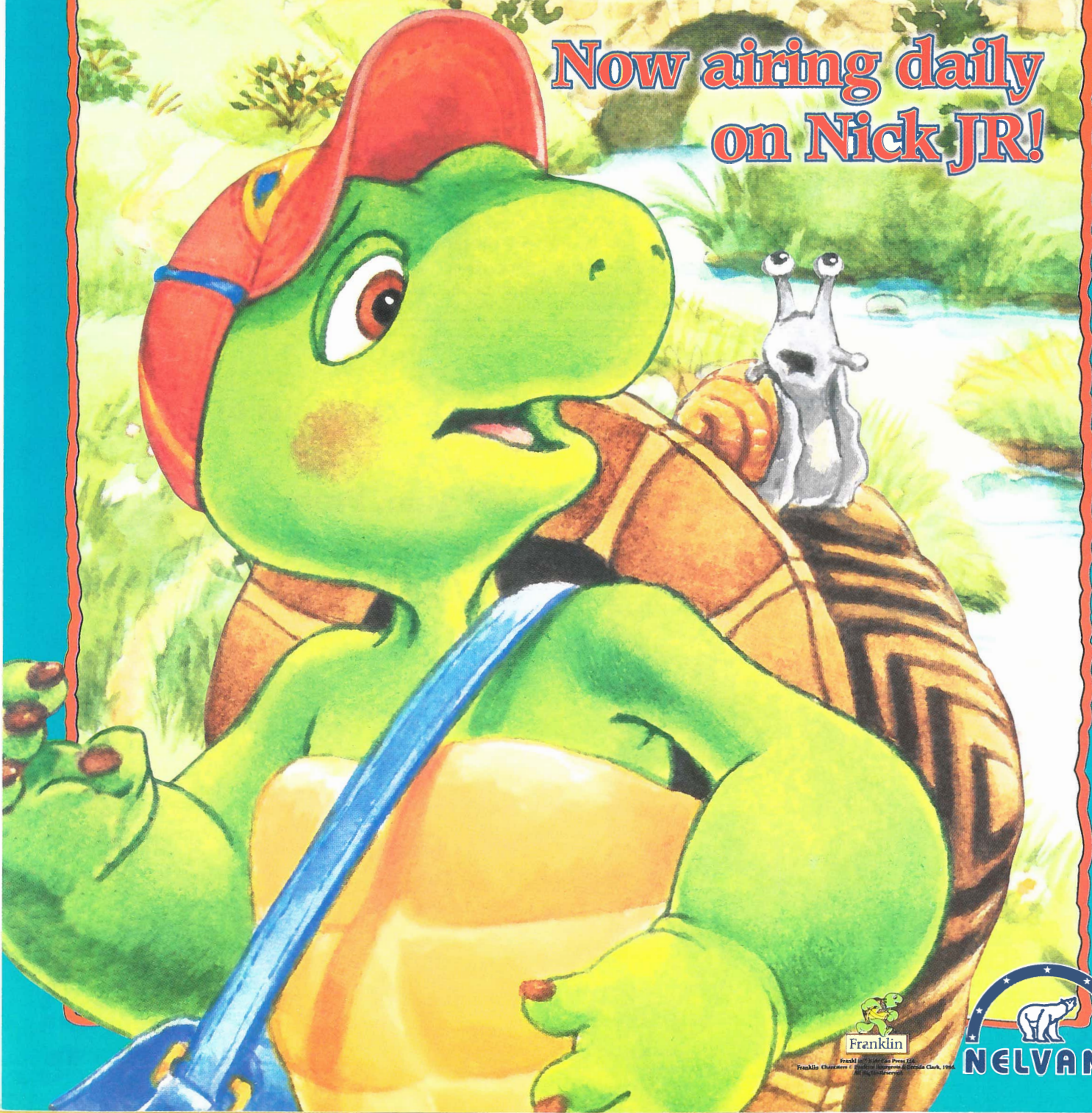
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Advertising to kids:
Creative

IN THIS REPORT:

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- 50** Cartoon Crisis Center supports toon bonding
- 52** Tuning in to what works in radio advertising
- 54** Suggestions for getting a laugh in kids advertising

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Advertising to kids: Creative

In this second part of a three-part series on advertising to kids, we hone in on creative. The brains behind some recent kid-targeted ad campaigns discuss how to make creative that gets kids' attention, whether the medium is TV, the Internet or radio, and chief creative officer Chris McKee shares his checklist of likely ingredients for getting a laugh from the peanut gallery.

Exploring the potential of the Internet as an advertising medium

Given the newness of the Internet as a medium to reach kids with advertising, the challenges of creating advertising for this quickly evolving tool are newly being tackled as more advertisers add an on-line component to their marketing plans.

Games have proven to be a winner with kids in on-line advertising, says Shawn Gold, VP of strategic planning at New York-based Rare Medium, an interactive communications agency that has developed Web sites for such clients as Oreo, Chips Ahoy!, Hot Wheels, Animorphs, General Mills, Butterfinger and Bugle Boy. Games in particular hit upon the proven successful formula of challenge, achievement and reward by, for example, challenging kids to seek objects on the site in a treasure hunt, posting winners' names in honor rolls and, in some cases, providing product as prizes.

Translating a brand into this kind of interactive experience requires building many layers of content, and a more targeted creative approach. For Chips Ahoy!, Rare Medium developed the chip blaster game as a way to engage kids and to communicate that there are more than 1,000 chips in every bag. Activities such as this offer consumers a

Oreo and Butterfinger Web sites offer games as a way to engage kids

"deeper experience of the brand," says Gold, as opposed to delivering a quick-hit message in a 30-second TV spot. Web sites also serve as vehicles to host contests and promotions, and to introduce new products to consumers.

What enhances the experience for the consumer is the ability to customize the site to each user. For example, the Hot Wheels site allows kids to create their own on-line license plate.



For advertisers, kids who seek out a site on-line tend to be a highly desirable audience since these kids went to the effort of finding the site, then spent time exploring it. Still, says Gold, only a portion of the kids audience is currently on the Web.

Getting additional kids to the site requires "On-line" continued on page 52

BY
ANDREA
HAMAN

One really Big Mallet to the rescue

Cartoon Network's 1998 image campaign taps into toon traditions

A phone rings inside a crisis center. The caller is desperate, and needs a solution—fast. Tensions are high as the counsellor tries to respond to the emergency. The comedy of the situation hits when the TV viewer realizes that the caller is a cartoon character and the remedy, from spinning your legs very fast to disguising yourself as a woman, comes from the wacky world of toons.

"Cartoon Crisis Center," Cartoon Network's highly original 1998 image campaign, took its direction from the channel's 1997 branding pool. In "The Toons Are Taking Over," two detectives investigated reports of unusual sightings, which turned out to be from toon land. "We noticed that people thought about us a lot differently right after [the campaign]," says Michael Ouweleen, senior VP and creative director of on-air at Cartoon Network. "It really reframed people's expectations of what it meant for us to own cartoons and to be about cartoons."

In mid-1997, the channel's marketing department, headed by Craig McAnsh, senior VP of marketing, began eyeing early 1998 for a new campaign launch. "Coming right out at the beginning of the year is a great time for us to kick off an image campaign," says McAnsh. The winter months are a high viewing period, and "[an image campaign] helps the network overall define its tone and compass for the coming year."

The small in-house team wanted the 1998 campaign to take all things cartoonish to the next level. "The detective campaign was a guerilla effort—we're taking over the world," says Ouweleen. "This year, it was ownership of cartoons and their traditions, their vernacular, their physics, their laws, their rules, their aesthetics." The concept would need to appeal not only to Cartoon Network's primary audience of kids, but to viewers of all ages.

As the next step, the team suggested about 60 tag lines. Of the two that stood out as winners—"Cartoon Network. Cartoon Rules" and "Cartoon Network. We

Are Cartoons"—the first came out on top.

As soon as McAnsh's brief received the go-ahead from Cartoon Net execs in late 1997, Ouweleen conceived four concepts the following weekend. The concepts, all playing with the laws of cartoons, were: a boot camp training attendees about cartoons; a don't-try-this-at-home approach with real people testing cartoon stunts; a people-who-don't-get-cartoons premise, featuring, for example, a boardroom discussion pondering how Fred Flintstone's car runs without gas; and a cartoon crisis center. The first was shelved due to its similarity to a recently released music video about how to be a rock star, the second seemed too dry, and of the remaining two, the team liked the latter best.

Even the best ideas sometimes need tweaking. Ouweleen changed the tag line to "Screwy, Ain't It?" after shooting had begun. The new tag line was a better fit because it's an entre-nous cartoon tradition, says Ouweleen, essentially from Tex Avery cartoons—for example, a character opens a door, only to find a brick wall on the other side, then pulls a sign from behind his back with a remark such as "Screwy, Ain't It?" scrawled upon it.

The spots also seemed flat in places in terms of comedy, and too difficult for the viewer to understand what was happening at the other end of the phone. The team considered whether to add scenes of the cartoon callers, but agreed that this would give the joke away too early. Instead, they decided to add short snippets in the caller's voice, supported with clips from cartoons at the end of the spots showing the moment at the heart of each crisis.

The campaign had a production budget of US\$500,000 for five individual spots, which were then cut into 60-, 30-, 23- and 15-second versions. This is at the "top end of what we usually spend," says Ouweleen, and McAnsh adds that campaigns for new series launches and network image campaigns garner the largest budgets. AH

Cartoon Crisis Center "Tree"

30 seconds



Counsellor:
"Gotta guy who needs to hide, fast!"

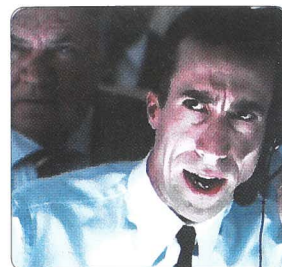
"Let's move!"

Let's move! Alright!"

Cartoon character (over phone):

"Heeeelp! You gotta hurry!"

Counsellor: "Sir, you've gotta stop screaming. Now, listen, I need you to look around."



"Is there a rock, a building, a car, anything to hide behind there, sir?"

Cartoon character (over phone):
(unintelligible)

Computer guy:

"What's he got?"

Counsellor: "One skinny tree."

Cartoon character (over phone):

"Heeeelp!"

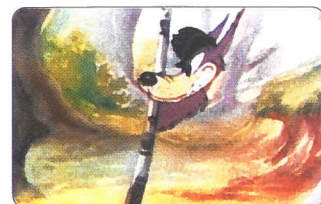
Counsellor: "We are going to get you out of there. You hold on...."

"Now, sir, for this to work, you're gonna have to tippy-toe behind that tree..."

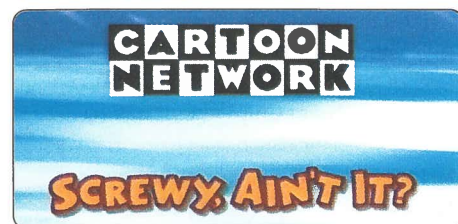


"and you will disappear."

The room explodes in celebration as the test woman gives a thumbs-up.

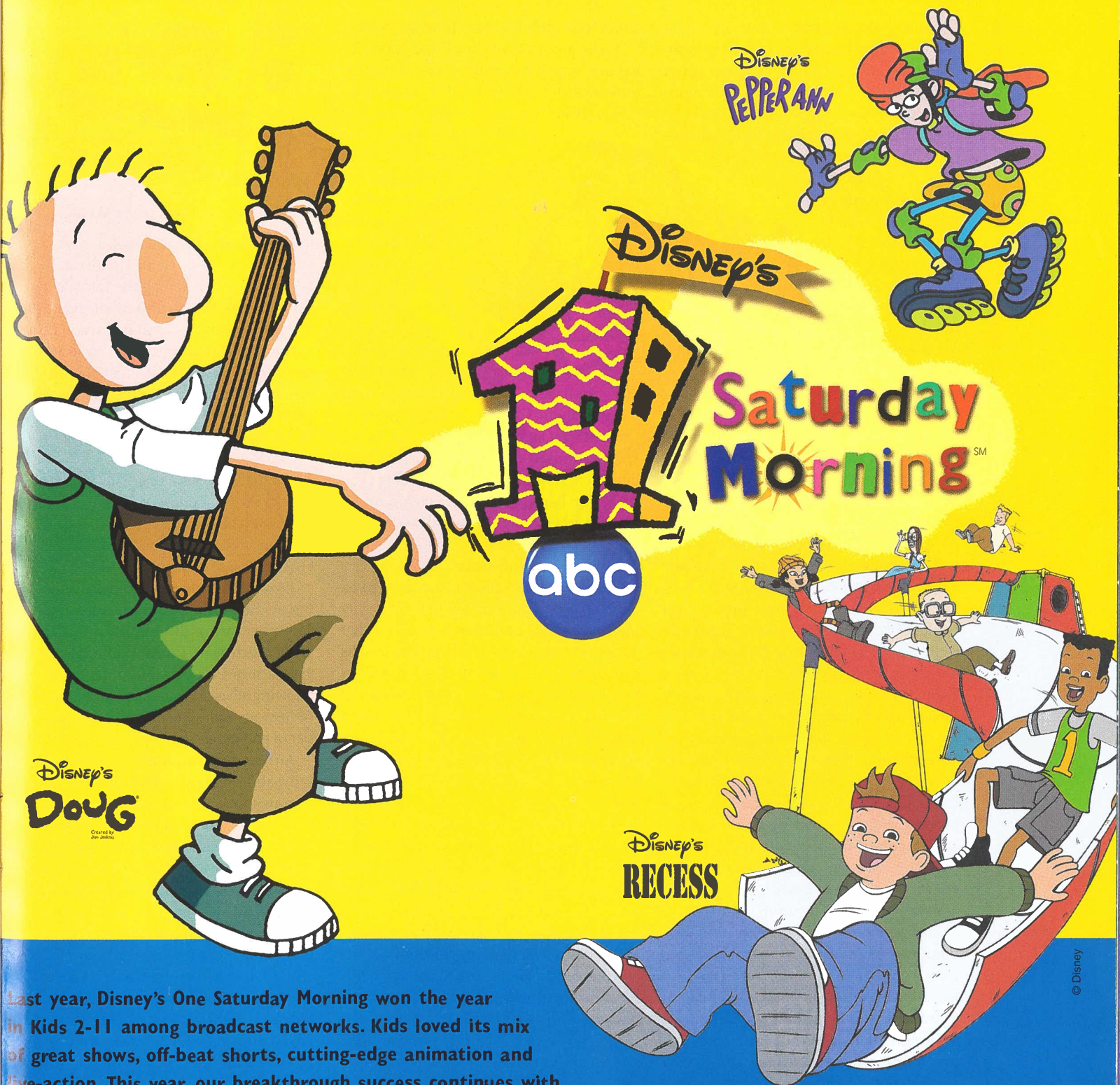


Announcer:
"Welcome to Cartoon Network."



Cartoon character: "Screwy, Ain't It?"

Being #1 is a tough job- but we'll keep it.



Last year, Disney's One Saturday Morning won the year in Kids 2-11 among broadcast networks. Kids loved its mix of great shows, off-beat shorts, cutting-edge animation and live-action. This year, our breakthrough success continues with Disney's One Saturday Morning dominating the ratings! And because it's on ABC, it reaches 99% of all U.S. households.

Source: NTL AA (000) Estimates, 8:30-10:30am, All Kids Programming on ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, and WB, 9/13/97-9/6/98, 9/12/98-1/10/99. Qualifications upon request.

Radio ads tap tyke trends

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Creating radio advertising that appeals to kids means keeping a close eye on the competition—and that doesn't mean other radio stations, says Robin Jones, operations director at Radio Disney. Jones oversees all programming production at Radio Disney, including in-house spot creation. "With children, we're competing with TV and video games," she says, adding that creating a "theater of the mind" to mirror the effect of visual media is the key to Radio Disney's overall success. Developing multilayered spot productions that combine music, effects and kid voices—"kids hear kids," Jones maintains—is a technique that must be balanced with keeping the message simple enough for kids to understand.

According to the other major contender in the category, *Fox Kids Countdown*, a two-hour syndicated radio show that airs on weekends in selected markets, kids radio spots are designed to strengthen the radio network's brand, as well as the advertiser's. Robin Lia, the executive producer at *Fox Kids Countdown* who puts in-house ads together, notes, "we [generate] creative that has an adventurous, athletic, high-energy, wacky flavor to it." For example, Jones's recent campaign for a Quaker Instant Oatmeal product with "dinosaur eggs" inside packages featured dinosaur trivia questions posed by a kid. The child's voice, surrounded by dinosaur sounds, provided the answer at the end of the spot.

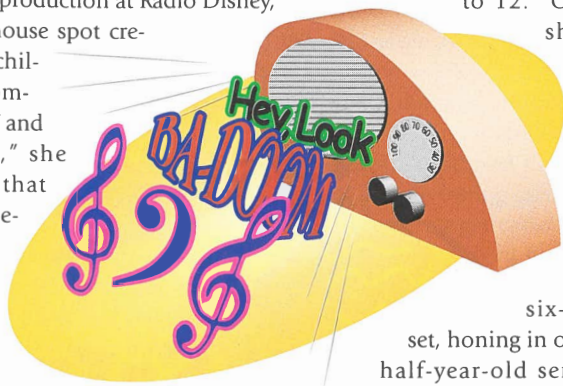
Hip-hop music is another creative hook that Jones has used in campaigns such as a recently produced campaign for Crazy Dips lollipops. According to Jones, a hip-hop jingle sung by kids helped the spot zero in on the youth audience. While urban pop that has 125 beats per minute is always effective for kids spots, focus groups have shown that kids also respond to novelty oldies such as

James Brown's "I Feel Good," notes Jones.

Focus group research at Radio Disney has also found that silly humor, including toned-down bathroom jokes, appeals to Radio Disney's audience of kids ages two to 12. "Our research has shown that kids today respond to the same stuff as when we were kids," says Jones. She also points out that humor primarily targets the six- to 11-year-old set, honing in on an eight-and-a-half-year-old sensibility, which appeals to kids across Radio Disney's entire target audience.

According to Ron Garner, eastern sales director at ABC Radio Networks, a big challenge for Radio Disney is "trying to get agencies to see that this is a real medium for kids." He attributes agency reluctance to the fact that so few outlets for kids radio exist. "We're the only company that has staked out this terrain in a major way—the only ones on the air 24 hours a day." Another reason why kids radio is still coming into its own is the fact that its effectiveness has yet to be measured, says Jim Pastor, director of network sales at Radio Disney. This year, a handful of ad agencies will complete a study specific to Radio Disney to gauge how much the ads boost brand awareness and product sales.

One aspect of the medium that has been charted is the fact that 48% of Radio Disney listening takes place in the car—an important consideration for creatives formulating ads. "This means [that] messages must speak not only to kids, but [to] moms," notes Pastor. In making children's spots acceptable to parents, broadcast standards for radio are very specific about what can be said and done, he says. "We have to differentiate very clearly when it's program time and when it's commercial time," says Pastor, pointing out that the same is true for kids advertisers on kids TV blocks.



"On-line" continued from page 49



General Mills' You Rule School Web site

knowledge of what kids look for when searching for sites. "Games," "free stuff" and "humor" are among the top search words used by kids on the Yahoo! engine.

Anticipating increased traffic is a technological challenge when creating a site. Since most sites are database-driven, additional users means additional stress on the site. Sites must also be built to incorporate new technology as it becomes available.

For the larger sites that Rare Medium has developed, budgets run in the range of US\$500,000 to US\$1 million, including the media buy, for the first year. Smaller sites can start at US\$100,000.

Proving the value of on-line advertising to clients can be difficult since sites cannot measure the impact on sales. Efforts such as on-line promotions provide a more measurable outcome by allowing advertisers to track the amount of in-store traffic generated or the number of participants.

An additional incentive to advertisers is the ability to use a Web site to find out information about the target audience. Still, Gold cautions, advertisers must be aware of parents' concerns about protecting the privacy of their kids on-line and not exposing them to inappropriate content. To succeed, sites need to provide content that is not only fun for kids but that makes parents feel comfortable with their kids spending time on a site. The best approach, says Gold, is to tell kids and parents up front that a site is an advertising vehicle. As media options go, while on-line lacks in numbers, it offers creatives a whole new two-way option in their ad palette.



If you ask us, there's a certain kids network that's been hogging the road long enough.

But based on last year's viewership, that's quickly changing: Throughout 1998, Cartoon Network's delivery of kids, ages 6-11, was up a whopping 39%, while the other network's delivery was down 9%.* Guess that goes to show the kind of mileage you can get from offering kids nothing but the world's greatest cartoons.



CartoonNetwork.com

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Humor: The hard-core kid creative

In marketing to kids, fun is everything. Fun, and the humor that creates it, sells. In Part II of a three-part series, The Geppetto Group, a leading kids advertising and marketing agency, offers insight into the mechanisms of kid humor that might even your odds in getting a laugh and a sale. Last month, the focus was strategy; this month, creative is put under the kid-humor-defining microscope.

Part II: Silly Sells

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Kid humor originates from the dynamic between kids' frustrations with the real world and the fantasies they use to escape it. Kids are frustrated by the limitations imposed upon them by the outside world, but they believe this condition can be changed. They seek out ways to transform their world into a place where they are heroes and where those who would restrict, limit and frustrate them are reduced to punch lines.

In contrast, adult humor revels in resignation and commiseration. From Rodney Dangerfield getting "No respect," to Homer Simpson crying "DOH!," adult humor is an exercise in acknowledging our limitations.

What's funny about adult humor is the realization that everyone else's life is as bad as ours, if not worse.

For kids, humor is not about reality, but about fantasy. And so are kid products. Both are mechanisms for escape. Both provide the child with his or her ticket out. A well-timed show of flatulence can make a class laugh and make the teacher seem power-

less and small. Is it any wonder that humor sells?

To maximize this relationship between product and humor, kid advertising must accurately depict the world of the child. All commercials should ultimately be demonstrations of what the product does and what the product does for the child. These demonstrations need to be precise and accurate with respect to the situation, dialogue and visuals. The comedy must also be crafted with an eye towards a specific age and gender. What's funny to a six-year-old boy might turn an eight-year-old girl into a half-pint heckler. With kids, the secret to comedy is a lot more than just timing.

There are many executional mechanisms of kid humor that, though rooted in fantasy and frustration, are the real goods when it comes to selling to kids.

• **Hyperbole:** Exaggeration is at the center of all kid humor. Kids

do not think in parody and cynicism the way adults do. Kid humor is extreme, physical and visual. Visualize the product benefit!

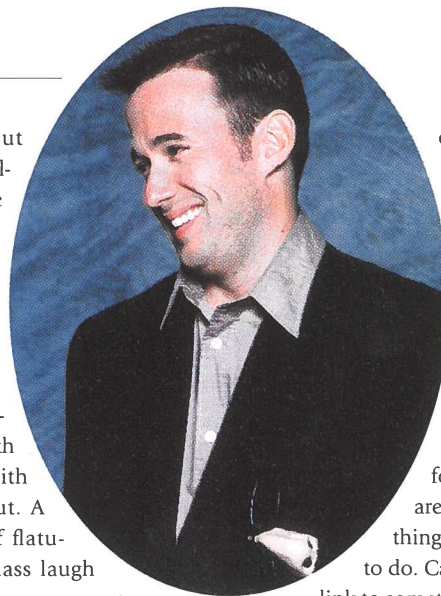
• **Taboos:** Flatulence, saying bad words, making fun of adults or people's physical imperfections are good for a laugh because they are representative of all the things that kids are forbidden to do. Can a product be a benign link to something naughty?

• **Incongruity:** Humor can also emerge from people not behaving the way they are expected to, such as babies smoking cigars or stoic corporate leaders sobbing. Part of Jim Carrey's appeal to younger kids is that he's an adult who talks out of his ass, an adult who acts like a child. What fantasy could be more appealing to a child than seeing the roles that they're forced to conform to destroyed? Can a product alter the hierarchy?

• **Expectation:** Familiarity helps kids process information. That's in part why equity characters are so successful in pitching products. "I knew he was going to get caught!" kids will say of the Trix Rabbit. This sense of familiarity allows kids to spot what's new about the product.

Humor in kids advertising is a tough gig. The executional elements must be dead on. The concept must balance recognition of frustration with the promise of escape. The product must be clearly linked to the humorous outcome, because a child will not rationalize the benefit. And the kids must laugh, because when it comes to commerce and comedy, if kids don't get it, kids won't want it.

Chris McKee is chief creative officer and founding partner of New York-based The Geppetto Group.



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SPECIAL REPORT

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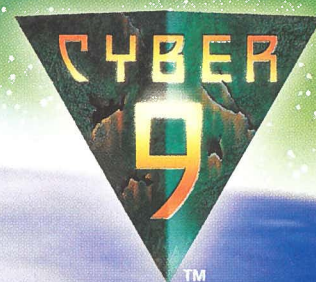
70 Star Wars

72 The specialty market

For more licensed product news pertaining to Toy Fair, see page 36

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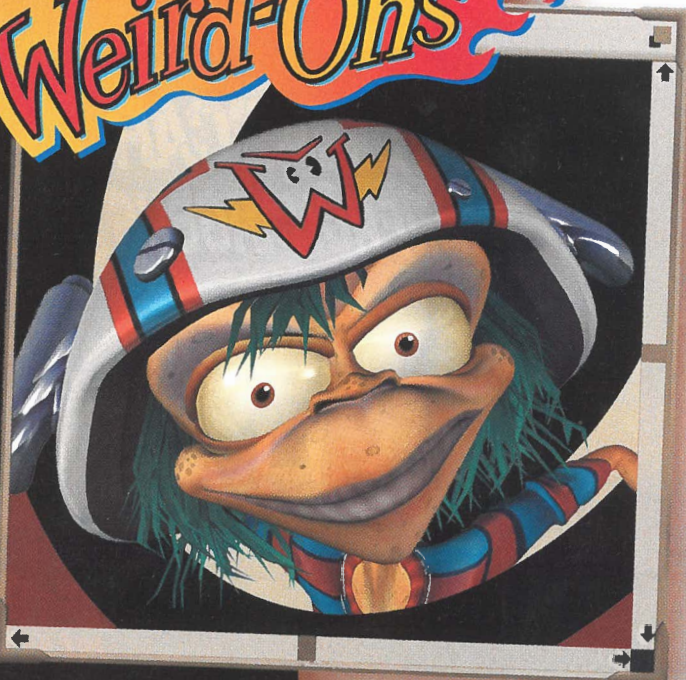
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TOY FAIR

If you're looking to meet someone in the kids business, chances are you'll run into them at the American International Toy Fair. Toy manufacturers come to display their latest inventions, studios to support new toys behind their properties, retailers to find the next holiday season's hit toy, advertisers and their ad and promo agencies to look for tie-in opportunities, and international attendees to pinpoint hot U.S. properties to introduce overseas. So many toys, so little time to play...

Age compression rattles the toy biz

Manufacturers and retailers respond to the trend of kids abandoning toys at younger ages

BY SIMON ASHDOWN

As toy buyers and sellers ride up and down the elevators and trudge from one showroom to the next at this year's American International Toy Fair, KAGOY is sure to be at the forefront of their minds. No, it's not the name for a new talking plush poised to deliver Furby-like sales next Christmas; rather, it's a trend that's causing an industrywide identity crisis. Also known as age compression, KAGOY (stands for "kids are getting older younger") is the term used to refer to the reality that kids are outgrowing their toys at an earlier age than they did a generation ago.

Although manufacturers and retailers began watching KAGOY wend its way through their business 10 years ago, 1998 was a year it seemed to hit with a vengeance. Last November, Port Washington, New York-based market research firm The NPD Group

Dolls such as Playmates' Amazing Amy are being designed to offer more interactivity



recorded significant dips in the retail sales of traditional toys (for example, infant/preschool, games/puzzles, dolls and action figures) for the seven-month period covering January to July 1998. Another study it conducted in 1998, which examined the age of the toy recipient, found kids were moving out of the categories of dolls and action figures at age six—a year-and-a-half to two years earlier than they did a decade ago, according to industry sources.

"KAGOY" continued on page 76

Disney casts Lord of the Apes to swing a summer hit

BY THE JUNGLE has been good to Disney, as proven by such hits as *The Lion King* and *George of the Jungle*, and Disney hopes the third time around will be successful as well.

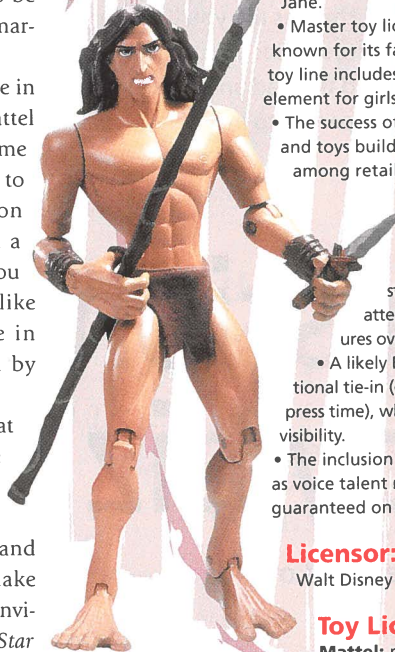
ED Disney believes that Tarzan is one of the strongest aspirational boy characters it has created in a long time because he represents much of what a young boy would like to be. Accordingly, Tarzan master toy licensee Mattel has devised a toy line that makes kids participants in the Tarzan experience. "The goal of the line is to [have kids] play like they are Tarzan, because they are going to come out of the movie feeling like they want to be Tarzan," says Lisa Mittleman, director of marketing at Mattel.

KIRCHDOERFER Tarzan action figures, which can operate in the most flexible manner ever for a Mattel product, enable kids to play out every theme from the film, from swinging from trees to riding on top of animals. Another action figure, Rad-Repeatin' Tarzan, comes with a talk-back feature that repeats anything you say into it in a deeper-pitched Tarzan-like voice, replicating the film experience in which Tarzan learns to speak English by mimicking Jane.

Another key item, the plush Jungle Beat Terk, features a character voiced by Rosie O'Donnell singing along to actual music from the film, a first for Mattel.

Tarzan's younger demographic skew and the appeal of animal characters will make Tarzan more than just a survivor in a toy environment expected to be dominated by *Star Wars*. Mattel won't disclose its promotion

budget for toys based on the film, but says the budget will be minimally equivalent to that of *Mulan* and *Hercules*.



Property: Tarzan

Hot Buttons:

- High-profile Disney properties always draw attention from parents and kids.
- The animated movie is positioned to debut as the first family property in the wake of *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace*.
- The Tarzan character has strong aspirational appeal to boys.
- Disney animal characters always have strong appeal with younger children.
- Toys will be designed to make kids feel like they are Tarzan or Jane.
- Master toy licensee Mattel is known for its fashion dolls; Tarzan toy line includes Jane fashion doll element for girls.
- The success of *A Bug's Life* movie and toys builds excitement among retailers for Disney-related movie products.
- *Star Wars* will drive traffic into stores and bring attention to action figures overall.
- A likely McDonald's promotional tie-in (contract pending at press time), which would increase visibility.
- The inclusion of Rosie O'Donnell as voice talent means promotion is guaranteed on her popular show.

Licensors:

Walt Disney Consumer Products

Toy Licensees:

Mattel: master toy licensee; producing more than 40 SKUs, including action

figures, doll sets, games, puzzles, play sets and plush

Thinkway Toys: interactive electronic toys

Disguise: costumes

Hedstrom: plastic and foam play balls

Rose Art: arts and crafts kits

Spin Master Toys: wall crawlers and other novelty toys

Target Audience for the Toys:

Primary: Boys ages three to six

Secondary: Girls ages three to six

Toy Availability:

May 28, in anticipation of a June movie release

Suggested Retail Price:

Range extends from US\$2 to US\$3 for collectible figures to US\$34-plus for jumbo plush; action figures up to US\$19.99.

Other Licensees:

To date, about 50 licensees, including:

Hanes: kids apparel

Johnson & Johnson: bath and toiletries

Thermos: lunch boxes

Springs Industries: bedding

Hallmark: cards and gifts

Licensing Do's:

- Make sure products feel like Disney's Tarzan (rather than previous versions of Tarzan).
- Show Tarzan interacting within the jungle environment.
- Toddlers: emphasis on younger Tarzan, animal friends and fun.
- Older boys: emphasis on older Tarzan and action/adventure.
- Older girls: emphasis on Jane, romance and adventure.

New Line's Austin Powers on a roll

Since the *Austin Powers* film launched on sell-through home video last March, New Line Cinema has been scrambling to respond to the demand for consumer products, says David Imhoff, executive VP of worldwide licensing and merchandising. Merchandise will roll out in advance of the next movie, *The Spy Who Shagged Me*, to be released June 11. Mike Myers is also on board as executive producer and voice talent for an animated, 13-episode series for young adults to air on HBO in 2000. *Austin Powers* hit theaters in May 1997, generating a fair US\$55 million at the U.S. box office, and the video has sold more than two million units in the U.S. The first licensed products—greeting cards from Kaboom, upscale costumes from Halloween Adventure, T-shirts from Changes and magnets from Ata-Boy—became available last fall. More than 20 licensees have signed on. Also showcasing product at Toy Fair will be Mattel (toy vehicles, includ-

ing the Shaguar), McFarlane (action figures and play sets), Trendmasters (talking collectible figurines and the C watch), Equity Sports (Headliners figurines), Funko (talking bobbing heads), Gibson Greetings (Silly Slammers), Basic Fun (talking keychain), Disguise (mass-market costumes) and Stanley DeSantis (apparel).

Muppets blast-off

The Jim Henson Company is lining up licensees and promo partners for *Muppets from Space*. This sixth Muppets film, to be released July 23, will be supported with product from Grosset & Dunlap (five movie tie-in books), Golden Books (coloring and activity books), and Western Graphics (poster). Five promotions are planned with yet-to-be-announced QSR, hotel, packaged-goods and theatrical partners. Associate VP Robyn Kerner says the company is looking to the movie to drive sales of general Muppets products from more than 30 licensees.

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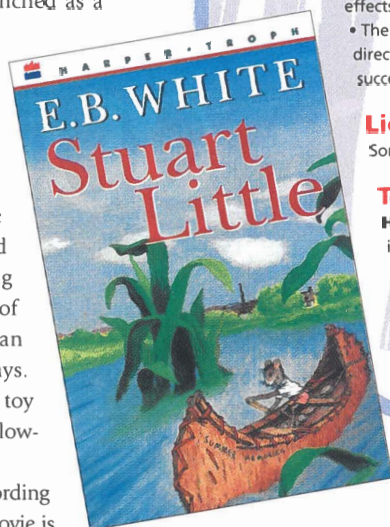
 SCHOLASTIC

Sony's big push for a little mouse

B Sony is going for the franchise gold with Stuart Little, whom Peter Dang, executive VP of worldwide licensing, merchandising and consumer products at Sony Signatures, likens to Charlie Chaplin's The Little Tramp in his upbeat, but far-from-sweet personality. "It's the appeal of the character that will drive all of the product," agrees Lorrie Browning, Hasbro's VP of global strategic marketing. "Stuart has an awful lot of personality."

Y The toy line is being launched as a classic franchise, rather than a one-pic wonder mouse, because of its expected longevity at retail. Hasbro's efforts will mirror that long-term strategy, according to Browning. "The plan is for Sony to build Stuart Little as an ongoing character, and development of toys [will extend] beyond an event movie focus," she says. Hasbro plans to refresh the toy line in the spring of 2000, following the movie's release.

Another asset at retail, according to Dang, is the fact that the movie is highly parent-friendly. "Stuart Little is not strictly a kids movie—it's more a family movie," he says. When adults recognize the character that a child is asking for, it produces an effect that Dang calls "narrowing the nag lag." In other words, parents are more likely to purchase products from a franchise they recognize, especially one with a classic literary pedigree, and



Property: Stuart Little

Hot Buttons:

- The primary hot button is the appeal of Stuart Little himself—a clever, enthusiastic, "can do" guy who just happens to be a mouse.
- The property's humor and slightly edgy tone reach kids and parents simultaneously.
- The Stuart Little character is already a classic through E.B. White's book.
- The realism of the movie's mouse was created via CGI utilizing live action combined with special effects, including CGI and animatronics.
- The film is directed by Rob Minkoff, director of *The Lion King*, one of the most successful kids franchises of the '90s.

Licensor:

Sony Signatures

Toy Licensees:

Hasbro: master toy licensee; producing a featured plush, plastic figures and play sets

Hasbro Interactive: interactive electronic games

Learning Curve: plush, wooden puzzles, toys and felt play sets

Milton Bradley: games, puzzles

Target Audience for the Toys:

Primary: Children ages zero to 12
Secondary: Parents

Toy Availability:

Fall '99: upscale toy line
Holiday '99: broad mass distribution, in time for a holiday '99 movie release

Suggested Retail Price:

Range extends from US\$5.99 to US\$30.

Other Licensees:

HarperCollins: children's books

Licensing Do's:

- Products should reflect that Stuart Little is a long-term franchise, not a one-time event picture, referring to his origins in the E.B. White book.
- Toy lines should highlight the central character, recreating the live-action nature of the feature film's "real" CGI mouse.
- Toy lines should highlight Stuart Little's diminutive size, in comparison to the human-scale world around him.

many parents grew up with Stuart Little.

The toy line, still in development, will allow children to relive the fantasy of this living, breathing character through the use of voice chip and movement features. "What distinguishes this mouse from Mickey is the fact that he's live action—a mouse with fur that happens to talk and dress like a human," says Dang.

Play sets will emphasize the fact that Stuart Little is a mouse-sized mouse in a full-scale human world, in keeping with the storyline that depicts Stuart Little being adopted by the Littles, a human family. Stuart's nemesis, Snowbell the cat, will also be featured in the toys. All toys will also reflect the movie's "playful, comedic tone," says Dang.

Clifford comes to mass market

Scholastic's Clifford The Big Red Dog is preparing for his first mass-market toy launch. Clifford master toy licensee Toy Island is creating collectible figures, wind-up and poseable toys, and plush that walks, grows or follows an infrared bone, with retail rollout planned for early third quarter. Other Clifford licensees include American Greetings (party goods), Center Enterprises (rubber stampers), International Playthings (puzzles and games), Publications International (press-the-page books), SmileMakers (stickers) and SideKicks (plush, wooden puzzles and activity sets). This is the first merchandising program for 37-year-old Clifford in recent years, and the time is right, says Peter Van Raalte, VP of consumer products at Scholastic Entertainment, because the preschool area is hot and a 40 x half-hour, animated TV series is in development. At press time, Scholastic Productions was in discussions with a potential broadcast partner to produce the series.

Jay Jay looks to land licensees

PorchLight Entertainment is introducing its real-time performance animation series *Jay Jay the Jet Plane*, produced with Modern Cartoons, to the licensing community at Toy Fair, and is seeking toy, publishing, interactive and music licensees, as well as promotional partners. The preschool property has already entered the video business, with a yearlong continuity program from WonderWings Entertainment that began in late December and another video line from PorchLight that will be distributed by Fast Forward Marketing to specialty stores. PorchLight will launch the first three videos at Toy Fair at a suggested retail price of US\$12.95 each, for a March 15 street date. Jay Jay came to life in 1994 as a video series from creator David Michel, and the TV series launched on The Learning Channel's Ready, Set, Learn! block last November, airing twice daily Monday to Friday.

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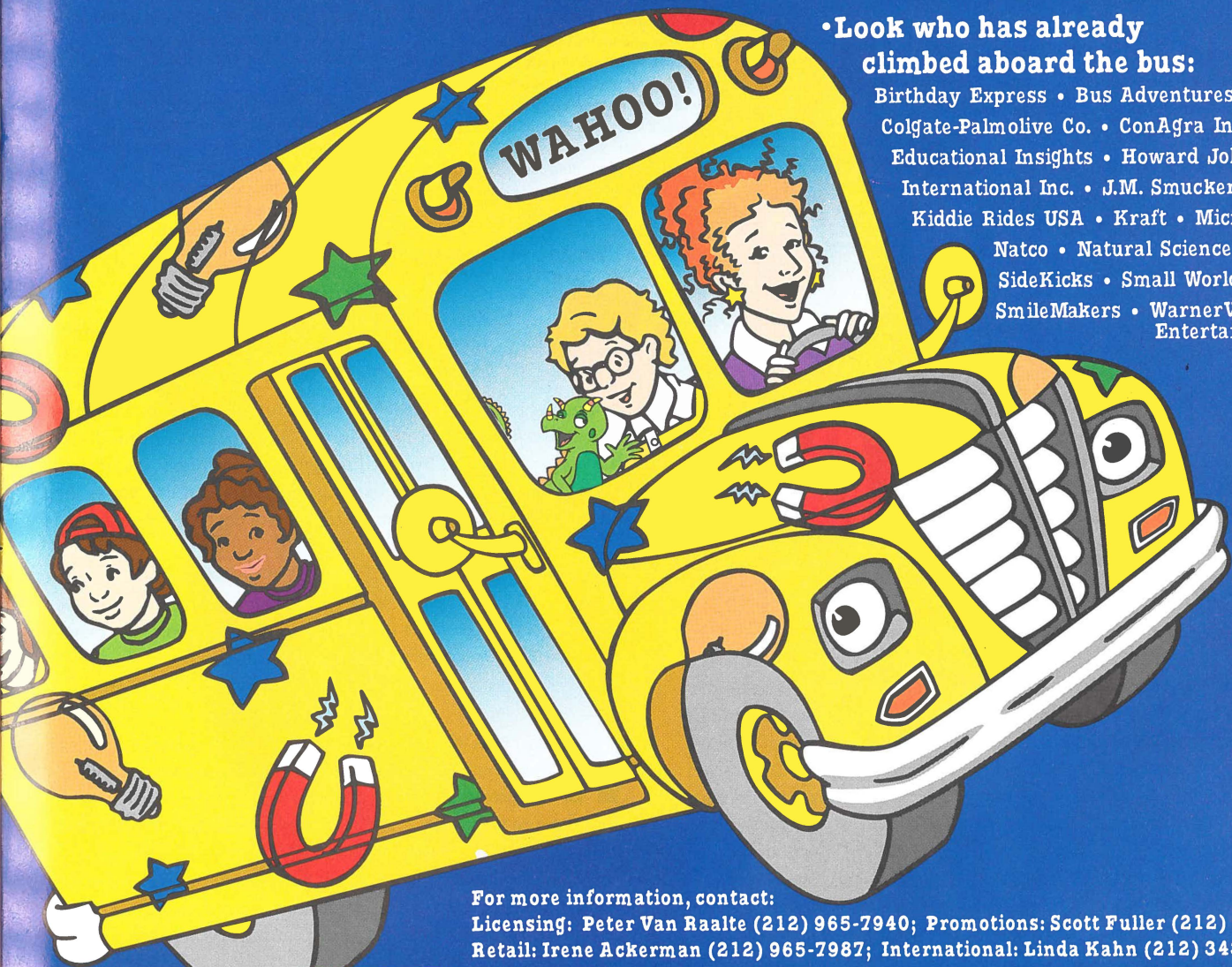
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 SCHOLASTIC

Universal combines horror and high tech for new toy action

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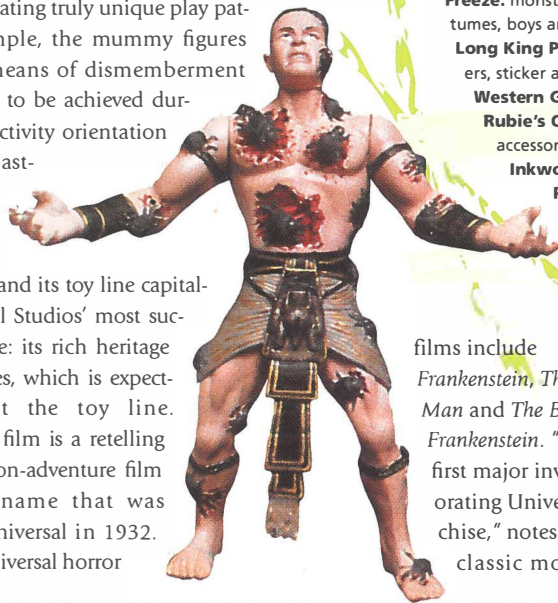
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According to Tim Rothwell, senior VP of domestic sales at Universal Studios Consumer Products, the Mummy brand, being heavily boy-targeted, will highlight the action-adventure nature of the feature film.

Influenced by Todd McFarlane's action figure lines, including Spawn and X-Files lines, the Mummy toys are fully articulated, notes John Schulte, president of Pangea Corporation. Creating toys that are functional and fun to play with, yet have a collectible look, reflects the trend begun by McFarlane, which Schulte dubs "cause-and-effect action." Features include voice chips, wind-up mechanics and movability of the figures and play sets—playing upon a "you cannot kill that which is already dead" theme.

Universal is aiming to make this toy line a stand-out by creating truly unique play patterns. For example, the mummy figures offer various means of dismemberment and desiccation to be achieved during play. This activity orientation gives the line lasting play outside the film release period.

The Mummy and its toy line capitalize on Universal Studios' most successful franchise: its rich heritage of horror movies, which is expected to benefit the toy line. Specifically, the film is a retelling of the epic action-adventure film of the same name that was launched by Universal in 1932. Other classic Universal horror



Property: The Mummy

Hot Buttons:

- The live-action/CGI special effects from Industrial Light & Magic will attract young adults and teens, as well as older adults, to the movie.
- The popularity of this *Raiders of the Lost Ark*-type action-adventure genre among the target audience.
- Pangea Corporation, following on the heels of its successful development of the DreamWorks Toonsylvania line, developed the line for Toy Island.

Licensors:

Universal Studios Consumer Products Group

Toy Licensees:

Toy Island: master toy licensee; action figures and play sets

Freeze: monsterwear and mummywear costumes, boys and men's T-shirts and sweatshirts

Long King Printing: novelty stationery, stickers, sticker albums, address books

Western Graphics: posters

Rubie's Costume Co.: masks, costumes and accessories

Inkworks: trading cards

Playing Mantis: plastic model kits

Tiger Electronics: electronic games

Target Audience for the Toys:

Primary: Boys six to 11

Secondary: Young teens and adults

Toy Availability:

Spring '99, in anticipation of a May 7 movie release

Suggested Retail Price:

Ranges from US\$5.99 to US\$19.99 for action figures; play sets are US\$9.99

Other Licensees:

Top of the Line: Halloween props and decor

Ebury Press: "making of" book

Penguin Putnam: adult novelization

Scholastic: digest junior novelization

Fruit of the Loom: men's and boys boxers

Licensing Do's:

- Address the older boy audience with somewhat edgy, high-quality collectible figures like those in Todd McFarlane's action figure lines.
- Steer away from any products that are girl-oriented.
- Forgo products that appeal to preschoolers.
- Create toys with unique features. For instance, one of the action figures allows the head to be pulled off the mummy, causing its spine to stretch out of the body, then retract.
- Create toys that give great play value that will extend the line's viability beyond the film release period.

films include

Frankenstein, The Wolf

Man and The Bride of

Frankenstein. "This [movie] is the first major investment in reinvigorating Universal's horror franchise," notes Rothwell. The film's classic monster motifs com-

combined with state-of-the-art technology are reflected

in the toy line's cutting-edge feel. As in the movie, the toy creators abandoned the "wrapped in bandages" look from the original movie in favor of an approach that shows the mummy in six stages of decay.

Nelvana throws push behind Little Bear

Little Bear, who is airing in his fourth season on the Nick Jr. block and first appeared in HarperCollins' Learn to Read book series in the 1950s, is getting a big new toy push at Toy Fair. Nelvana has signed on nearly 20 licensees for its animated preschool TV series, including Kidpower (talking plush), Shellcore Toys (preschool toys), Gund (plush), Learning Curve (wooden toys), European Toy (finger puppets), Paramount Home Video (videos), The Learning Company (CD-ROMs) and HarperCollins (books). Paramount began shipping videos in fall 1997; products from Kidpower, Gund and Haddad (apparel) followed last fall; and other items will roll out throughout 1999. FAO Schwarz in New York City will feature Little Bear in a promotion this month, which will include a book signing by Maurice Sendak on February 7. Little Bear will be one of several properties in a Nick Jr. summer promotion with Subway. At Toy Fair, Nelvana will also be highlighting *Franklin's* move

from CBS to Nick Jr. last month; screening the upcoming direct-to-video feature *Babar: King of the Elephants*, to be released in July; and introducing new properties Puff the Magic Dragon, Redwall and George & Martha.

New Batman flies into licensing

Warner Bros. Television Animation's new TV series *Batman Beyond* is a bold transition for the classic DC Comics superhero, offering new licensing opportunities. Batman master toy licensee Hasbro will unveil action figures based on the property at Toy Fair. *Batman Beyond* kicked off on Kids' WB! in a 9:30 a.m. Saturday timeslot last month. Set in Gotham City in the early 21st century, the series stars teen Terry McGinnis, who defiantly dons the cloak of the Caped Crusader after his father is murdered, mentored by the retired Bruce Wayne. A *Batman Beyond* comic book series from DC Comics also launched last month.



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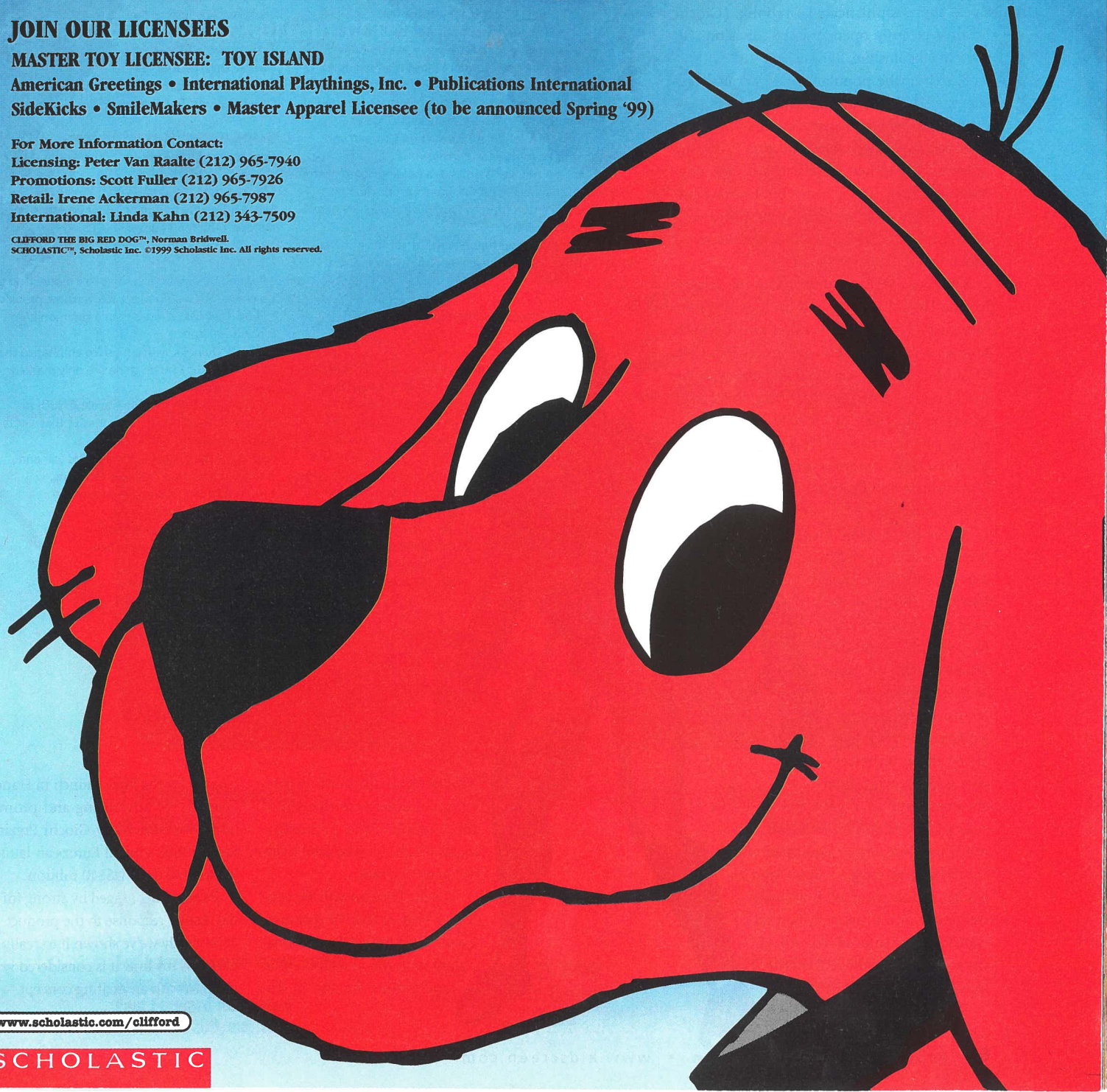
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www.scholastic.com/clifford

SCHOLASTIC

Saban's sleek Euro hero slinks onto the action-figure scene

B With product based on *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace* already starting to hit the shelves, 1999 will be a tough year to compete in the action figure category. But Saban Enterprises International and master toy licensee Giochi Preziosi of Italy think they have a strong contender on their hands with super-sleek, super-sophisticated Diabolik. (Giochi Preziosi recently opened a U.S. division, GP Toys, in Lincolnshire, Illinois.)

R Based on the popular Italian comic book character Diabolik, the animated series is a co-production between Saban, France's M6, Italy's Mediaset and Toho/Ashi Production Company of Japan. "We turned a character who was originally a bad guy [in the comic book series] into a hero who is a mix of James Bond and Batman," says Michel Welter, president of Saban Enterprises International.

Saban envisages a Princess Sissi-like launch for the Diabolik series and toy line. Princess Sissi, too, was a well-known and beloved European historical figure—Princess Elizabeth of Austria. To build on the familiarity with the property in Europe, Princess Sissi was launched there first in October 1997—with enormous success—paving the way for a successful worldwide series introduction and licensing campaign thereafter.

Dario Berte, managing director of Giochi Preziosi, says Diabolik is Giochi Preziosi's most important new master toy license for 1999 and 2000. He explains, "One of the success factors for any action figure line is gadgets. Diabolik has all of these unbelievable gadgets, with different ones featured in each episode of the series." For example, Diabolik has a multifunction dagger equipped with climbing aids, oxygen supply and a gas gun, plus a car with assorted weaponry and a motorcycle that transforms into a jet-ski. All of these are represented in the introductory toy line. Berte adds



Property: Diabolik, Track of the Panther

Hot Buttons:

- Diabolik is a sleek, cool character with an arsenal of high-tech, transforming weapons and accessories.
- The series' sophisticated back story of a reformed former criminal mastermind will keep kids interested; it's more than a simple case of good vs. evil.
- The series' four co-production partners—Saban Enterprises International, France's M6, Italy's Mediaset, and Toho/Ashi Production Company of Japan—make for great creativity.
- Broadcaster M6 and Mediaset, a holding company for terrestrial channel Rete Italia, are co-production partners. This will ensure that the show is aired in key time slots in France and Italy.
- Launching the action figure line with a solid number of initial SKUs will help achieve a strong shelf presence.

Licensors:

Saban Enterprises International

Toy Licensees:

Giochi Preziosi: master toy licensee; producing a line of 10 action figures (nine x five-inch figures and one 12-inch figure), plus various accessories, including a car and motorcycle equipped with gadgetry and transformational ability; also creating role-playing items, such as a pen that transforms into a vehicle, and a watch equipped with a flashlight, magnifying glass and voice recorder

Target Audience for the Toys:

Primary: Kids ages four to eight
Secondary: Collectors ages 25 to 45

Toy Availability:

France: Third quarter '99
Italy: Fall '99 or spring 2000
Other markets: To be determined

Suggested Retail Price:

Consistent with the price of other action figure toys.

Other Licensees:

Saban is looking to sign on other licensees across all major product categories.

Licensing Do's:

- Position Diabolik as a positive role model who uses his brains, not superpowers, to overcome problems.
- Show Diabolik as more than a common hero—he is a cultural icon.
- Portray Diabolik with a mask to emphasize that he is believed by Saban to be the only masked hero in Europe.
- Use images that connote traveling, such as maps and directionals, to emphasize that Diabolik is always on the run.
- Recreate the gadgetry and vehicles (car and motorcycle) as the show's key elements.
- Represent Diabolik as a master of disguise and technology.
- Use the panther as a symbol for Diabolik because he is sleek like a panther.
- Use black and dark blues, the main colors for the show.

that the transformation concept is another core element of the Diabolik line. "Transformation is always successful [with children]," he says.

Giochi Preziosi will be producing four or five TV commercials to air in the fall. Promotional plans with M6 and a potential food partner are also in dis-

cussion for the line's launch in France. Overall, the advertising and promotional investment by Giochi Preziosi for Diabolik's initial European launch is expected to be US\$10 million.

Berte is encouraged by strong initial retailer response to the product. "Everybody we've shown it to really likes this toy line. It is considered very modern with an exciting concept."

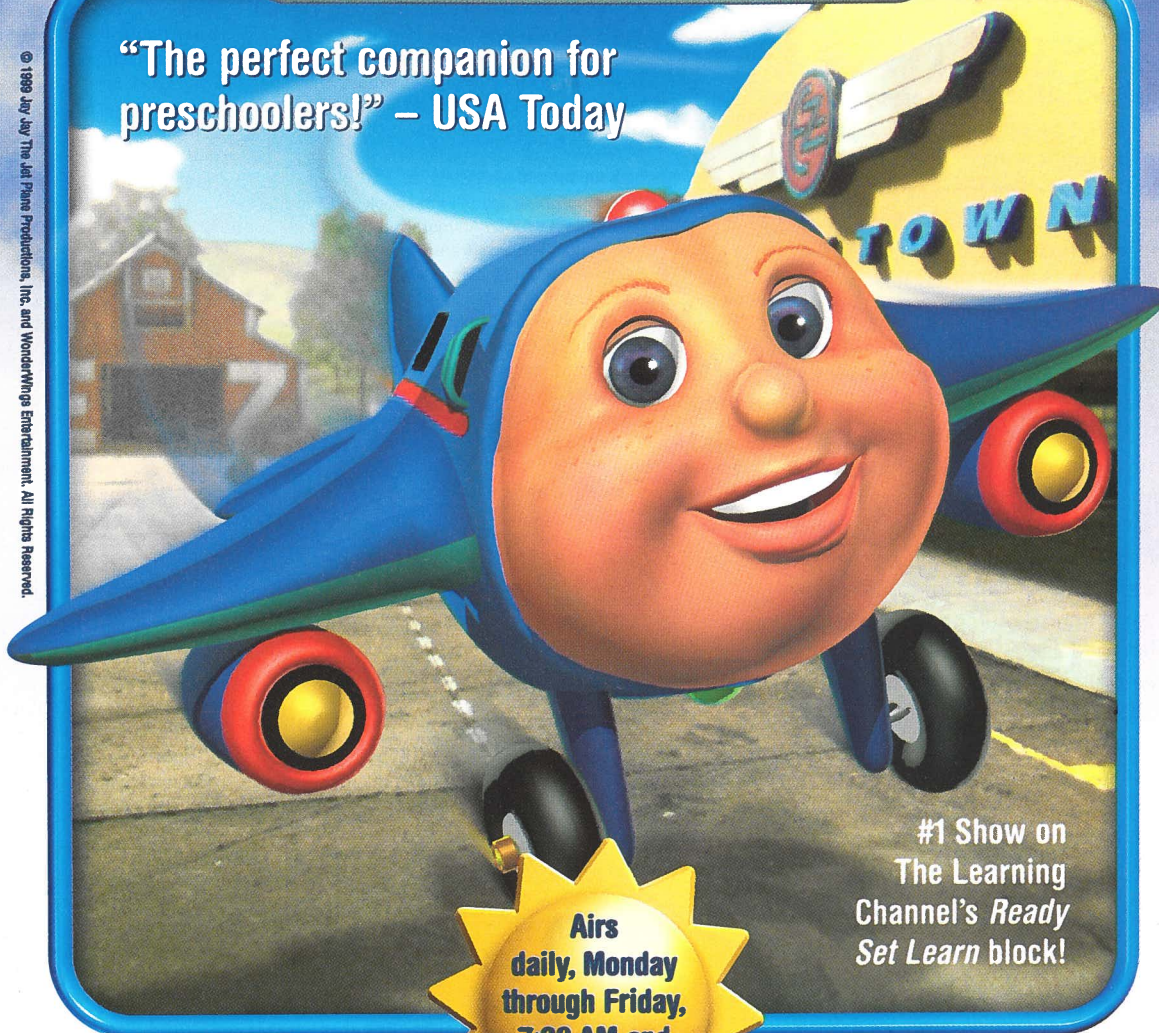
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Scholastic and Hasbro transform Animorphs into toys

Property: Animorphs

B Y It's hard to imagine a better match for Animorphs than Transformers-style toys.

A N The property piqued Hasbro's interest when the books launched in print, says Lisa MacEachen, director of marketing at Cincinnati, Ohio-based Hasbro Toy Group, but Animorphs really became attractive to the toy giant when Scholastic confirmed the production of a TV series (by Scholastic Productions in association with Canadian-based Protocol Entertainment) for Nickelodeon, giving the broader exposure needed to support a toy line.

H A M A N Positioning the Animorphs action figures under the Transformers brand will give the toys the benefit of the brand's high consumer recognition. This year, the brand (relaunched as Beast Wars—Transformers in 1996) will be 15 years old. During that time, it has become the number-two-selling toy line for Hasbro, with worldwide sales totaling in excess of US\$1.25 billion. And consumers who buy Transformers toys tend to "buy deeply," says MacEachen—the average owner has six products.

Plus, says MacEachen, Hasbro is devoting plenty of resources to make a big statement at retail. Endcap displays will showcase the new products at major retailers this spring. Nickelodeon and Hasbro are teaming up for a two-week on-air promotion in which kids can win a walk-on appearance on the *Animorphs* show by completing an entry form that will be available at retail. The promotion kicks off at the end of this month. TV and print ads will begin in early March and run through April. In March, Wal-Mart will host a contest challenging kids to transform the toys the fastest. Toys 'R' Us will offer a free lenticular keychain with purchase for four weeks starting at the end of March, with a new keychain available each week. Hasbro is also planning fall promotions with Target, Kmart and KayBee Toys.

Despite these advantages behind the Animorphs toys, Leslye Schaefer, senior VP of marketing and consumer products at Scholastic Entertainment in New York, is mindful of the competition. "I think everybody is concerned about Star Wars," she says, and licensors appear to be holding back on product launches to avoid losing sales to this "Goliath" (Hasbro is also the master toy licensee for Star Wars). But MacEachen is confident that there is room for a different kind of action figure line to compete

with Star Wars and other products in the category, and she believes that Transformers toys are the only products with this type of play.

Hot Buttons:

- Strong awareness for the Animorphs franchise, which began with the release of the first book in June 1996 and has grown to a 26-title series (as of this month) with more than 24 million copies in print worldwide.
- The TV show on Nickelodeon, which kicked off in September, exposes the property to a wider audience.
- The property's Web site (www.scholastic.com/animorphs) registers about 500,000 hits per month.
- The morphing action in the book and TV series is a natural fit for an Animorphs toy line positioned under Hasbro's Transformers brand.
- Billion-dollar equity behind the Transformers action figure lines.
- Hasbro's advertising, promotion and distribution muscle, with US\$7 million to US\$10 million in advertising and US\$1 million to US\$1.5 million in promotional support planned for the line in 1999.
- Ongoing plot with continuing characters.
- Depth of and mystery in the stories keep kids intrigued.
- Complex transformational play of the toys.

Licensors:

Scholastic Entertainment

Toy Licensees:

- **Hasbro:** master toy licensee; divisions creating toys are:
- Hasbro Toy Group:** producing 15 action figures for 1999, including the five kids in different sizes, plus Ax, Visser 3 and H'Ork-Bajir, and a package with three kid characters that together transform into a giant dinosaur
- Hasbro Game Group:** puzzles, board games
- Tiger Electronics:** handheld electronic toys

Target Audience for the Toys:

Same as the target audience for the book and TV series—kids ages seven to 12—although the toys will skew towards boys, while the books and TV show draw a fairly even split of boys and girls.

Toy Availability:

Mass-market launch in February, with new products available every couple months until the holiday season.

Suggested Retail Price:

Action figures ranging from US\$10 each to US\$30 for the dinosaur bundle; puzzles for less than US\$10.

Other Licensees:

- To date, nearly 20 licensees, including:
- **Columbia TriStar:** videos • **GT Interactive:** CD-ROM games • **Decipher:** card game
 - **Disguise:** costumes • **Fun 4 All:** keychains
 - **Hallmark:** party goods • **Antioch Publishing:** stationery • **AME:** boxer shorts

Licensing Do's:

- Toys should be age-appropriate for the target audience of the books and TV show.
- Animorphs, not Transformers, should be the most important logo.
- Pay particular attention to the use of the word "morph" and the way the property is described in order to emphasize that the property and the toys are not just about morphing.
- Focus on the property as a whole, as opposed to the stars of the TV show.





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Wayne Moss, Director (*Noddy, Skinamarink*)

Phil Craig, Production Designer (*Noddy*)

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Anatomy of a Furby: The essential elements of a hit toy

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A year ago this month, the buzz first broke about a fuzzy, inexpensive new toy with some remarkable abilities. It could talk in its own language, play games, dance to music, respond to touch, light and sound, and perhaps most amazingly, interact with others of its kind. It was Furby, and now that the Christmas madness has died down and a fresh batch of toys are vying to follow in its footsteps, it's time for an analytical look at the furry phenomenon. After all, creating the hit toy of the Christmas season is a toy manufacturer's holy grail, and lessons learned from Furby and his predecessors can help create the hits of the future.

In analyzing Furby's popularity, one can't help but wonder how much of the phenomenon is due to savvy marketing and how much is due to the qualities of the product itself. Jeff Jones, VP of marketing for Hasbro-owned Tiger Electronics, which developed the toy, says the two are closely entwined, but the marketing played a more limited role with Furby than with other products. "The role of marketing in this instance is to generate awareness of the product and awareness of the types of things the product can do," he says. "And then, ultimately, the product has to deliver, because even with the best hype in the world, if the product is not functional, people will simply stop buying it." Jones says Furby received a lot of its publicity through the mainstream press, with coverage kick-started by a 12-page spread in *Wired* magazine last September. Trend watchers picked up on the story, and Tiger helped build media interest by sending out samples of the toy to a targeted group of outlets across the U.S.—a strategy successfully used by Coleco when it launched the Cabbage Patch Kids 15 years ago.

A launch at FAO Schwarz in New York on October 2, attended by more than 100 media representatives previously supplied with samples, clinched Furby's popularity. Advertising undertaken by Tiger consisted of a series of print ads appearing in New



Tiger Electronics' Furby, in case you've been under a rock for the last year

York before the FAO Schwarz launch, followed by TV ads, clever press releases and cross-promotions with Cartoon Network and Hi-C. Tiger actually had to pull its TV advertising shortly after it began airing because, as Jones says, "you can't advertise to empty shelves."

The fact that the shelves were empty contributed to the buying frenzy, producing a flurry of the annual Christmas store-storming tales in the popular press. And although Jones admits the coverage generated by the temporary Furby shortage "certainly hasn't hurt" sales, he is adamant that

the shortage wasn't intentional. He points out that Tiger calculates the number of toys to manufacture based on the orders placed at Toy Fair, and that as of last December, Tiger had already shipped more than double the approximately one million pieces ordered last February.

That Tiger was intentionally limiting supply is just one of the many myths that quickly sprung up about the toy, many of them giving Furby powers far beyond what he is actually capable of. Marc Rosenberg, Tiger's VP of corporate communications, "Hit toy" continued on page 70

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Black hole surrounds new Star Wars toys

Never before has a feature launch been accompanied by so much publicity and so much secrecy at the same time. Lucasfilm approved the release of four figures based on *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace* seven months before the movie's debut this May, but when it comes to additional toys in the works, at KidScreen press time, the company is keeping absolutely silent.

Master toy licensee Hasbro, which is producing the figures for the prequel, says that prototypes will be shown at Toy Fair in a separate room with restricted access. Hasbro's U.S. marketing manager for Star Wars, Deron Ellis, says that Lucasfilm is "very carefully controlling access" to information about the new toys.

Hasbro is keeping new Star Wars toys under wraps



Lucasfilm has been mixing ultra-secrecy and blockbuster advance publicity in its marketing efforts as well. The company managed to turn the unveiling of *The Phantom Menace* trailer into an event in itself last November by carefully controlling access to information about the film until the trailer was shown. It was reported that 500 people showed up for an advance viewing of the trailer at a theater in California, and nearly two-thirds walked out without even bothering to watch the feature that followed. Similar stories surround the production of *Phantom Menace* one-sheets, about which it was reported that the print run was closely supervised by reps from Fox and Lucasfilm to ensure none of the sheets, which were produced with built-in anti-counterfeiting devices, were leaked to the public early.

Other licensees for the prequel include Scholastic, The Lego Group and Nintendo of America, which recently signed a five-year worldwide agreement for three new Star Wars games, two of which will be based on *The Phantom Menace*. PepsiCo is the main promotional partner for *The Phantom Menace*, with cross-promotions planned for Pepsi's beverage lines, Frito-Lay snack foods, and the KFC, Taco Bell and Pizza Hut quick-service restaurants.

George Lucas recently told the magazine *Vanity Fair* that he plans to stop producing Star Wars films after the three prequel releases, ending speculation that he would also produce three sequel titles, bringing the series to nine films. **DH**

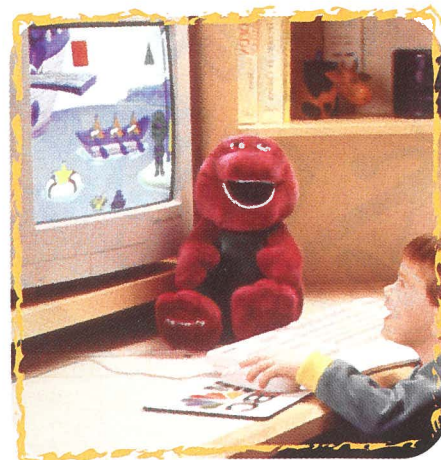
"Hit toy" continued from page 68

recalls a woman calling to say her Furby started to cry during a tragic episode of her favorite soap opera, "which was novel," he says, "because Furbys don't actually weep." Another misconception stems from Tiger's claim that the toy starts off speaking Furbish and then gradually "learns" English as its owner plays with it. In fact, although the toys can respond to loud noises, much like the Clapper light switches, they cannot understand or repeat words. Furby's entire English vocabulary is pre-programmed at the factory, then automatically released over time as the toy is played with.

All in all, both Jones and Rosenberg admit that, to a certain extent, they were as surprised by the response to their marketing efforts as anyone else. "Believe me, no one would benefit more than me from saying we did it all ourselves," says Rosenberg, "but a lot of it just happened."

Tiger's marketing strategy worked because somehow the qualities of the toy itself captured the imagination of parents, kids and the media. Retail analysts and Tiger's executives agree that Furby's key qualities are the randomness of its responses, its general sophistication, its ability to emulate a living creature and its collectibility. These leverage points have appeared in various forms in all of the hit toys of the last 15 years, from Cabbage Patch Kids to Tickle Me Elmo to Tamagotchi. Furby has built on the strengths of these toys, and in fact, could be considered to have a Tamagotchi heart in a fuzzy shell, but the factor that sets it apart from previous hits the most—its randomized response to the same stimuli—may be where its key power lies.

"Furby is completely different in that you never quite know what he's going to do. He's unpredictable, and that makes him a lot of fun," says Jones. The fact that when you tickle Furby he is just as likely to respond "Ohhh, tickle more" as "Ohhh, no more tickle" makes the toy less rigid and more open to becoming part of varied games. At the same time, unlike Microsoft's ActiMates, which require complicated setup involving your home computer, the toys are ready to go



Microsoft's ActiMates, including Barney, interact too—but you need a computer for the full effect

right out of the box—kids instinctively know what to do with them.

At US\$30, like Tamagotchi and Teddy Ruxpin of past years, Furby was one of the most sophisticated toys available for under US\$50 when it hit its peak popularity. This sophistication is a trend that Dan Acuff, president of California-based Youth Market Systems Consulting and author of *What Kids Buy and Why*, says will continue. "Once conditioned to a certain level of stimulation, one needs to keep that level or advance beyond it to keep the challenge going," he says. "Kids face that all the time with electronic games, so they're wanting more sophistication, and they're leaving some of the more simple play patterns behind." This observation is echoed by retail analyst Margaret Whitfield at Boston-based investment banking firm Tucker Anthony. "Children of today don't want to play with a lifeless, inanimate object," she says. "They want to play with something they can communicate with. I'm sure there will be many more."

Both the randomness and sophistication of Furby allow the toy to more closely emulate a living creature, a pet that can be safely left in the hands of a six-year-old without worrying about harm coming to either pet or child. Specifically, Furby borrows the nurture-inducing qualities of a Tamagotchi, in that it needs to be periodically fed (by sticking one's finger in its mouth) or it gets sick and starts sneezing.

"Hit toy" continued on page 76

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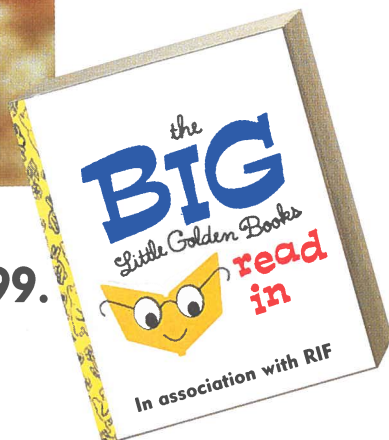
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The specialty market: Values for your money

BY 1992, John Lee launched his educational toy company, Chicago-based Learning Curve, with a line of 29 products. At the time, Zany Brainy had one store, and Noodle Kidoodle had yet to open its first. Fast-forward seven years. In the interim, the doors to 560 specialty toy stores have swung open. Zany Brainy has 75 store locations; Noodle Kidoodle, 42. And Lee's start-up, famous for its blocky wooden toys, now produces more than 2,400 SKUs and has enjoyed 50% sales growth every year since its inception.

To varying degrees, the specialty market is populated with success stories of this kind. And while it's not about to challenge the sales might of mass—according to the American Specialty Retailing Association (ASTRA), specialty toys accounted for 5% of the US\$22.6 billion worth of toys sold in the U.S. in 1997—it has become an important and, in some cases, lucrative alternative for manufacturers, retailers and licensors.

A survey of how the specialty toy market operates quickly reveals an industry that is putting its own gloss on the hallmarks of successful consumer products, with an emphasis on quality and service. To really understand the demand, however, it's necessary to examine the properties of the toys themselves.

What makes a specialty toy a specialty toy?

In the language of specialty toy retailers, it is a product that has inherent value, either educational or developmental. That definition can suggest a wide range of product, from the latest plush animal—the tactile element of which can meet the developmental needs of preschoolers—to Lego, which demands from kids a certain level of creativity and problem-solving ability.

"It's not easy to define," says Sally Lesser, president of ASTRA and owner of two specialty toy stores called Henry Bear's Park, located in Cambridge and Newton, Massachusetts. "It's a toy that invites the child to make a relationship with it, [unlike] a lot of the toys you'll find at mass [for which] the play pattern is already written out."

While they may struggle over the semantics of the term, invariably those in the specialty market best define their product in relation to toys typically found at mass. For some, specialty toys are nonviolent and less likely to be based on a

licensed property. It's these qualities, says Lesser, coupled with today's parents, who are more attune to the importance of play for children, that are driving sales. Others, like Learning Curve's Lee, look beyond the toys' characteristics for further clarification.

"When most marketers use the term 'specialty,' it's in reference to a certain class of doors," says Lee. "We try to keep our products in outlets that will merchandise and sell them in an appropriate way. By definition, that precludes the big-box warehouse stores, [which] don't do a very good job of merchandising product."

The retailers and the vendors

Because the majority of specialty toys aren't presold through extensive TV advertising, the service specialty toy retailers provide plays a crucial role in the sale of the product.

"A good specialty toy retailer educates the public, through display [and] well-trained staff, that play is critical to the lives of their children," says Peter F. Reynolds, president of Brio, a toy manufacturer, based in Germantown, Wisconsin, that makes wooden toy and train sets for kids preschool-age and up. Generally, specialty retailers will show an eagerness to work with vendors by attending workshops that explain how their toys function and how they can help a customer's child, says Reynolds. Lesser says she's seen a noticeable spike in sales of Brio product at her stores, after her staff started participating in Brio workshops in the past two years.

The service component, however, encompasses more than just getting the message out to shoppers—presentation is also a major determinant of sales. In the specialty toy store, a lot more of what Lee calls "merchandising or romancing of the product goes on than at mass." Specialty toy retailers are more likely to feature displays of toys with product out of the box, which allows parents and children to try a toy before they buy it. Additionally, specialty retailers regularly hold play or activity days, which involve staff showcasing a line of toys and educating store patrons about their attributes. Vendors long ago picked up on the marketing potential of the activity days, and now, most have developed their



Specialty store displays, such as Zany Brainy's Miffy display, offer hands-on opportunities to try a toy before buying

own kits that they provide to retailers as a way of, ostensibly, sponsoring the events.

"For the [specialty manufacturer-retailer] equation to work, you can't see the product as just product," says Tom Vellios, president of Zany Brainy. "A lot of specialty product requires presentation, hype in store, but it also requires an environment that the customer is coming to for more than just the product." Zany Brainy has taken an aggressive approach to organizing activity days, holding a free concert, toy demo or story reading every day of the year in each of its 79 locations. Zany Brainy maintains an events team, which sits down with the chain's merchandising department to map out the focus of the events for the year. That emphasis on events has paid off for both Zany Brainy and specialty toy vendors, says Vellios, who cites Go-Go's Crazy Bones as an example of a toy that benefited from its in-store promotional efforts. According to Scott Harris, president of Toy Craze, the U.S. manufacturer of Go-Go's Crazy Bones, on a per-store basis, Zany Brainy has sold three times as many of the collectible plastic skulls than any other retailer.

"We got behind it, [and] kids started forming clubs. We'd bring a Crazy Bones van into the store, our staff would talk it up, and the rest is history. Conversely, the same product went into Toys 'R' Us, and they gave it one facing in the store.

"Specialty" continued on page 74

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Specialty stores can give products like Go-Go's Crazy Bones the promo support they need to boost sales

"Specialty" continued from page 72

It's never going to sell that way," says Vellios.

Vellios envisages specialty toy retailers as being more than just the distribution point in the specialty market matrix; instead, he sees them as a platform in which manufacturers, big and small, can test their toys before they officially release them. In the spring of 1997, Spin Master Toys tested a prototype for Air Hogs—one of this holiday season's hottest-selling toys—in front of customers in the parking lots of Zany Brainy stores. The demos allowed Spin Master to quickly gauge public reaction, says Vellios, and to make the necessary adjustments. Spin Master continued working with Zany Brainy's buyers, fine-tuning Air Hogs, before launching last June.

Another perk for vendors is the extended shelf life their products receive at specialty.

"If an item works in the specialty market, it could live five, six or seven years longer than it would at mass," says Lee, who adds that Learning Curve is still producing the 29 SKUs it started with seven years ago. The continued sales strength of Learning Curve's Thomas the Tank Engine wood line bears this out, says Lee.

For their part, vendors working in the specialty market offer retailers a host of advantages that they wouldn't otherwise get stocking the same products that mass retailers do. Stores are able to sell most items with markups of 45% to 50%, which is much more generous than the slim to nonexistent margins discounters and mass retailers place on the TV-advertised licensed merchandise they carry. Specialty vendors also provide strong in-store marketing

support, and give retailers a first crack at a range of innovative product.

Despite these perks and the high level of cooperation that exists between retailers and vendors, there are downsides to operating in the specialty market. For manufacturers, the minuscule market share the specialty toy biz represents means they move less volume per item than they might at mass. For retailers, the limited resources of some manufacturers makes fulfillment a problem if a toy takes off and every store is clamoring for orders. Then there's the ever-present lure of the mass market for vendors. When products make the jump to mass, they effectively nullify the exclusivity of distribution that specialty retailers demand. It's safe to assume Beanie Babies wouldn't be the cash cow that they've been for specialty retailers if they were also available at mass.

Testing the licensing waters

All of these problems may be of trifling concern, however, when seen against the backdrop of a more significant trend in the specialty market: the introduction of edutainment licensing.

"Four or five years ago, you hardly saw any licensed product in the specialty market. Retailers used to say, 'I don't sell licensed product.' Now, it's gotten to the point where as a retailer, if you don't carry licensed product, you're moving one step away [from survival]," says Brio's Reynolds.

Learning Curve's Lee says the key to growth has been "properties like Blue's Clues, Tele-

tubbies and Thomas the Tank Engine and Friends that have, in a wholesome way, captured the hearts and minds of children and have made product available on an exclusive basis to the specialty market." (Currently, 70% of Learning Curve's products and two-thirds of the 150 SKUs it will unveil at this year's Toy Fair, including new items in the Thomas the Tank Engine and Friends and Little Bear lines, are based on licensed properties.)

David Jacobs, VP/group head of licensing at The Britt Allcroft Company, licensor of the Thomas the Tank Engine and Friends property, believes licensing has been a win-win proposition for the specialty market. The consumer's willingness to pay more for a quality licensed product from a specialty retailer, says Jacobs, has allowed licensees to move more items at higher wholesale prices through specialty distribution routes than they could through mass, where low prices are more of an imperative for customers. And for retailers, adds Jacobs, stocking licensed product based on high-profile kid properties helps to drive traffic into their stores.

But Reynolds cautions that the very force that's causing the market to grow could also spell its downfall. The sheer volume of licensed product making its way onto the shelves of specialty retailers, especially products based on a property for which there's a separate merchandising program for mass, confuses consumers and detracts from the distinctiveness of the specialty retailer.

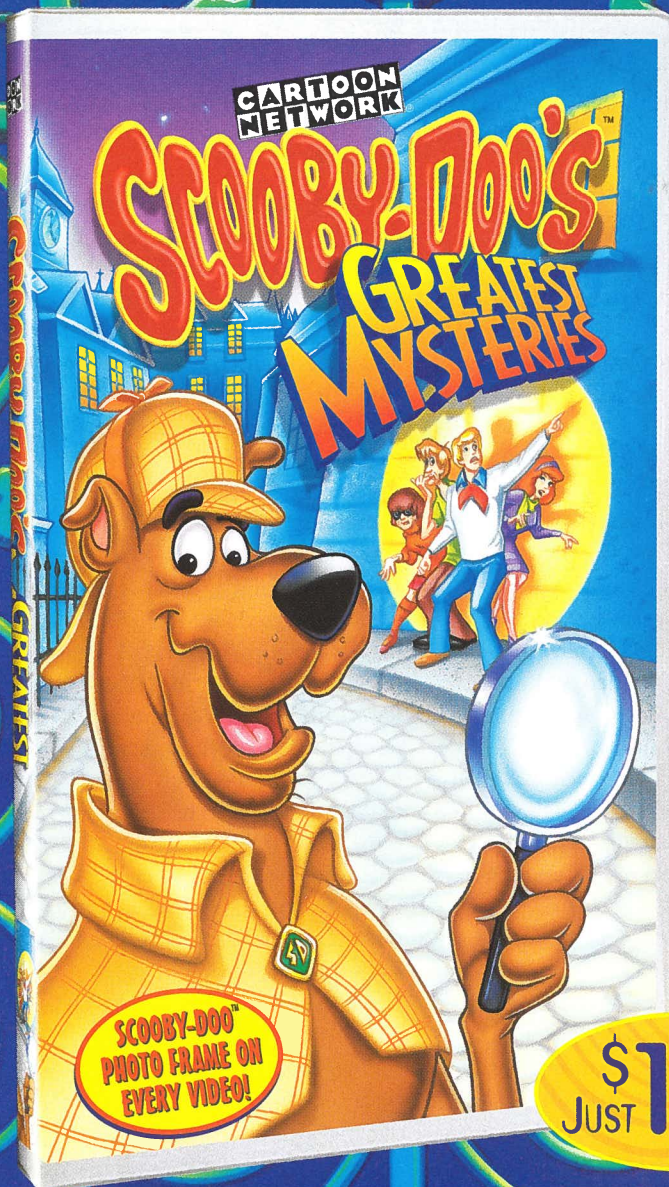
"When you buy licensed product from a specialty retailer, the specialty retailer is stocking that product because it engenders positive values. Right now, there's product for mass and specialty that's based on the same property. There's less definition, and, therefore, there's the danger of there being less reason to go to a specialty retailer."

Further complicating matters, says Reynolds, is the fact that more mass retailers like Target and Penny's are looking for kids toys and products that aren't available at Toys 'R' Us or Wal-Mart.

"You have a situation [in which] the mass market and the specialty market are moving closer to each other. If that line gets blurred, it will hurt the specialty market more than it will the mass market. I believe the specialty market can double in size without blurring the line, but the danger is we're at 5% and we're already blurring the line. We're in the values business—we need to focus on the values business."

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Hit toy

continued from page 70

By mimicking the needs of real creatures, be they babies or pets, Furby is building on the nurturing demanded by dolls that need their bottles and diapers changed, and Cabbage Patch Kids and Pound Puppies that need to be adopted. In one way or another, all of these toys depend on their owners, giving kids a feeling of responsibility for their store-bought friend.

The final feature attributed to Furby's success is its collectibility. This was inten-



Personalized names helped propel Cabbage Patch Kids to mega-hit status

tionally built into the toy by offering six core fur patterns, four eye colors and 24 pre-programmed names—for a total of 576 variations. The diversity in the toy gives collectors a reason to buy more than one, makes each toy seem more special, and has made Furby auctions more interesting. The availability of individualized varieties contributed to the success of the Cabbage Patch Kids, which also came with their own names, and is perhaps the main leverage point for the popular Beanie Babies.

Jones knows that keeping demand up in the future may prove to be more of a marketing challenge than creating the demand in the first place, and to that end, a March tie-in with McDonald's Happy Meals and a possible Furby TV show are planned to keep things rolling. As well, as part of Hasbro's out-of-court settlement of a suit launched by Warner Bros. over Furby's similarity to its Gremlins characters, Tiger agreed to redesign Furby for Toy Fair this month.

KAGOY dilemma

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So, what's causing kids to junk their toys sooner, and more importantly, what if anything can the industry do to keep kids interested in toys longer? On the eve of the new millennium, both are questions that retailers and manufacturers find themselves grappling with.

Computers, TV, movies, sports, today's kids have more entertainment options available to them than ever before. And they're exercising those options whether they want to or not, says Richard Leonard, VP of the Zandl Group, a New York City-based market research firm that tracks trends among kids and teens.

"What you have [today] is a lot of aggressive baby-boomer parents, who are pressing their children to excel and enter into activities like organized sports and summer camp—things that, traditionally, kids have started at a later age," says Leonard. The trend has caused the emergence of the alpha child, says Leonard, a miniature adult who is too busy over-achieving to play with toys.

Another factor contributing to the toy exodus has been television. With the proliferation of cable and specialty kid channels, not to mention video, children can pick and choose what they want at the push of a converter button.

"Growing up, I had three choices: ABC, CBS and NBC," says Michael Tabakin, age 42, director of trend merchandising at Toys 'R' Us. "You turned on the TV, and you saw Captain Kangaroo. On Sunday nights, you'd watch *The Wonderful World of Disney*, and then you'd call it a day," says Tabakin. The propensity of TV outlets to tailor shows and entire blocks of programming to a narrowly defined demographic, he says, is causing kids to transition quicker.

"Fifteen years ago, you had shows that would appeal to a one- to four-year-old. Now, you have shows that are targeting a one- to two-year-old, so the three- to four-year-old is watching something else," says Tabakin. "We're seeing kids going from *Teletubbies* to *Sesame Street*, to *Barney*, to *Power Rangers*. There is a natural progression. But from *Teletubbies* to *Power Rangers*, there isn't an awful lot of years there." As



Video games like *Cool Boarders 3* for Sony PlayStation whip board games and are cool badges

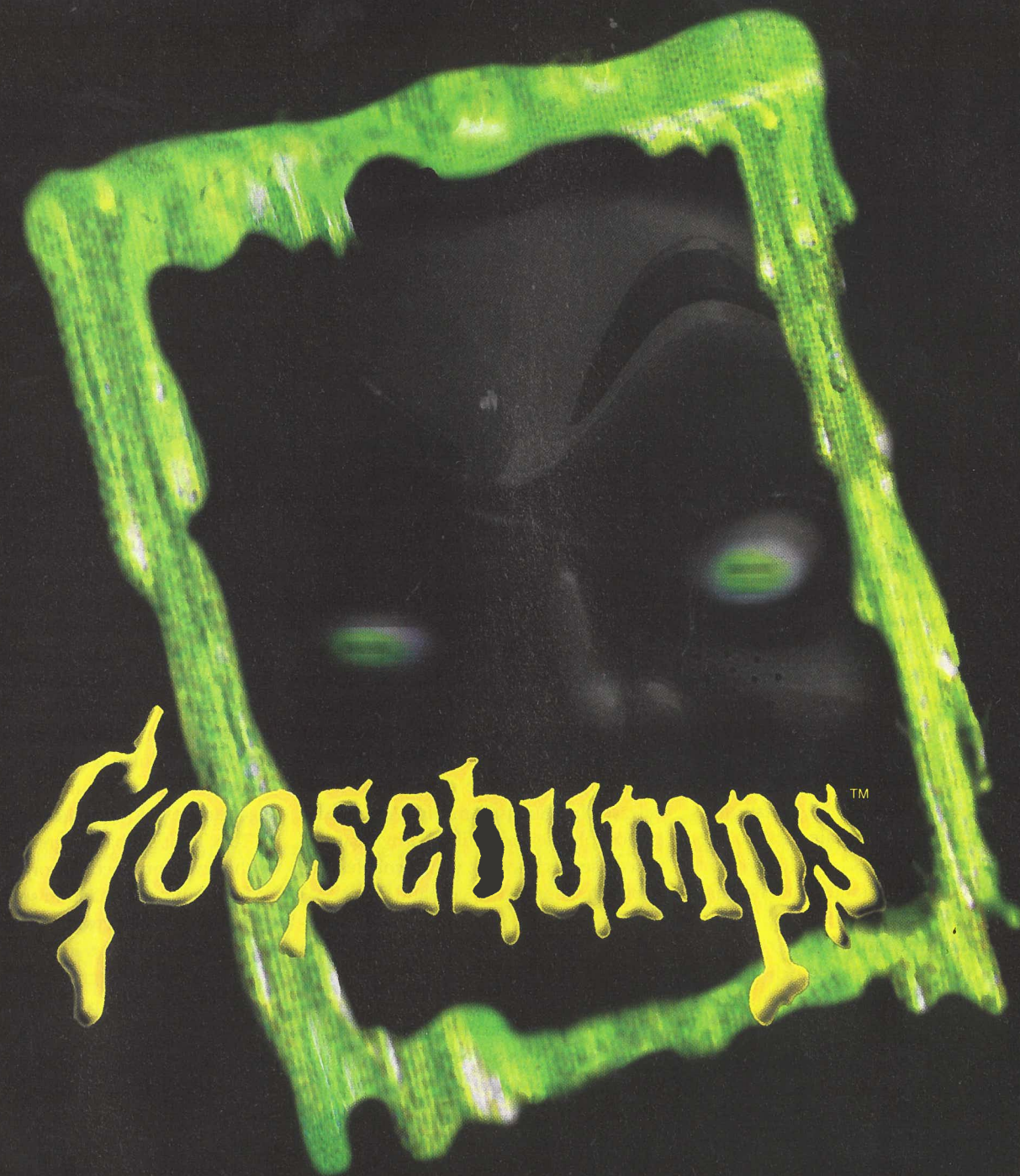
an aggregate, the number of viewing choices makes it difficult for kids to develop an allegiance to any one show, which in turn affects their purchasing decisions, says Tabakin. Today's kids are less likely to want all of the licensed toys based on a TV or film property, because in 12 months, they're already onto something else.

If individual TV programs aren't holding the attention of kids the way they used to, computers, video games and other products with electronic components certainly are. According to NPD, sales of video games increased by 24% for 1998, pushing total sales up from US\$5.1 billion to US\$6.3 billion. In its 1998 *Roper Youth Report*, the New York City-based market research company Roper Starch Worldwide found that 32% of kids ages six to seven that it had surveyed had a video game system in their room, and 28% of them already owned a handheld video game system. The sharp graphics and hi-tech features of both make the play values of board games and action figures quaint by comparison. Also, video games and handhelds confer upon users a certain amount of coolness that traditional toys cannot.

"There's definitely a social stigma to playing with toys. Kids feel a little embarrassed to admit that they play with dolls, [for example]," says the Zandl Group's Leonard. In its research on this matter, Zandl, which counts Mattel as one of its clients, interviewed 500 boys and 500 girls ages six to 17 in focus groups, but discovered through one-on-one questioning that more kids were playing with dolls and action figures than had originally let on in

"KAGOY" continued on page 78

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KAGOY

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the focus groups. "I think there are a lot of closet Barbie users out there," he says.

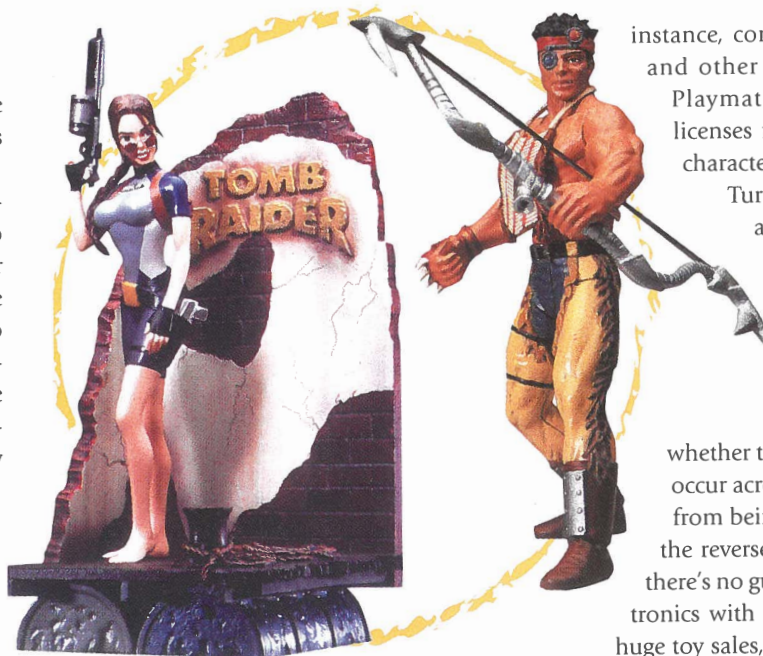
Nevertheless, kids are interpreting playing with toys to equal an activity that is better suited for, well, children. At the same time, they see video games and electronic handhelds as an acceptable, more mature alternative. Manufacturers and retailers are slowly altering their products and their offerings accordingly.

Industry giants like Hasbro and Mattel have embarked on similar paths, moving their well-established brands into the categories of software and electronics. Mattel has leveraged Barbie into a number of software titles, as sales of the dolls reportedly sank for 1998.

Likewise, Hasbro has developed CD-ROM titles for its well-known board game Monopoly, in addition to licensing Monopoly apparel and a Monopoly café, which opened in the FAO Schwarz store in Las Vegas in the fall of '97. "It all boils down to increased entertainment choices for both kids and adults," says Ginger Kent, president of global brand marketing and product development at Hasbro. "Rather than defining the issue as age compression, we view it as expanded choices for leisure time. Tomorrow's successful companies will [be the ones that] successfully integrate technology and innovation into their product mix."

To that end, last Toy Fair, Hasbro acquired Tiger Electronics, whose expertise in electronic interactive products helped bring to market what can be deemed as the year's only certifiable toy hit, Furby. In December, Mattel followed suit, purchasing the second-largest educational software producer, The Learning Company. Last September, Toys 'R' Us announced its intention to introduce another retrofit, the C3 format, which would see the retailer dedicate more floor space to electronics and kids apparel and less room to toys.

The industry isn't abandoning tradition-



Toy companies like Playmates are turning to video game characters such as Lara Croft (above) and Turok (right) to keep boys interested in action figures

al toys altogether, though. The solution most manufacturers are turning to is to fuse traditional toy forms with cutting-edge technologies. While Furby is the most recent example, other toys, like Playmates' Amazing Amy, have also fared well. Released last August, Amazing Amy speaks 10,000 phrases, and like Furby, features time-based technology, which enables it to know when to wake up, eat and sleep.

"Because Amy is smart and has an interactive element, we're finding that the doll is skewing a little older for the category," says Gina Beebe, senior VP of marketing, girls toys, at Playmates. According to Beebe, girls seven to nine years of age are buying Amazing Amy, based on Playmates' consumer tracking. Playmates will introduce Amy's older sister, Ally, the next generation in the Amazing line, at Toy Fair. "Where Amy allows girls to play Mommy," says Beebe, "Ally will allow girls to interact with it as one would a best friend." As a result, she hopes, Playmates will retain an older girl demographic.

Another way the Costa Mesa, California-based company is trying to keep girls in the toy realm is by combining the interactive component with other product categories that appeal to girls' aspirations to be older than they are. Best Friends Forever, Playmates' next iteration of Nano pets, for

instance, comes with a mascara pencil and other makeup items. For boys, Playmates is focusing on signing licenses for action figures based on characters in video games, such as Turok from *Turok: Seeds of Evil* and Lara Croft from *Tomb Raider*. Playmates' strategy—if they like the game, they'll buy the action figure—is being tried by many toy manufacturers with different products. But whether techno-chic transference will occur across multiple categories is far from being money in the till. In fact, the reverse is just as likely to be true: there's no guarantee that including electronics with traditional toys will deliver huge toy sales, says Dan Cooney, a former senior VP of marketing at Fisher-Price.

"You've heard it said with respect to licensing—'you don't just slap a license on a product, and then think you'll have a great licensed product.' I think it would be a mistake to do technology slapping, to throw lights and sounds on a toy that doesn't need it," says Cooney, who now heads up Wink'n Blink'n & Nod, a West Seneca, New York-based manufacturer that makes electronic toys for preschoolers.

Toys 'R' Us's Tabakin agrees. "I think that within every product category, you're going to have innovation, and in some cases, it's a great marriage between the innovation, the license and the toy itself. In some cases, a simple toy is still a great toy," he says.

So, if talking plush animals and 3-D graphics aren't the answer to KAGOY, what is? So far, there is no answer, and that, says Tabakin, may not be such a bad thing. At the same time, he recognizes the challenge facing the industry to create and promote products that can engage a generation of kids who are better educated, more sophisticated and more discerning than ever.

"It comes to the point where you had *Jurassic Park*, and then you had the Star Wars trilogy movies [that were released around the same time]," says Tabakin, citing an analogy in the world of film, "and then kids say to themselves 'well, what's next? I need to be wowed. What's the next wow?' It's sort of 'a how can you top this' mentality."

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Located in the Javits NEW North Pavilion, Specialty Source opens one day before Javits on Thursday, February 11th and runs through February 15th!

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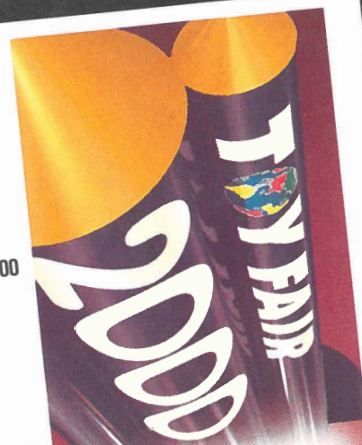
MILLENNIUM UPDATE

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radarScreen

PDI faces pachyderm photo-realistic challenge

BY KAREN M. ZURKE
The success of *Antz* has spurred DreamWorks and Pacific Data Images (PDI) to announce production on a third collaboration, entitled *Tusker*. *Antz* director Brad Lewis will helm the adventure film about a herd of elephants on a perilous trek across Southeast Asia, and the villains of this feature will be human poachers who shoot to kill.

RE
MAZURKE
According to Grignon, getting photo-realistic characters is still the name of the CGI game: "I think the three big CG films that have made it to the big screen up to this point have been centered around characters and worlds that the computer can handle fairly well; insects and toys have hard, smooth surfaces, and the environments are fairly static." *Antz* and *A Bug's Life* both easily handled the crowd scenes, but clothing, fur, clouds and hair have not yet been successfully pulled off on any scale, he says.

ILM created the most realistic computer-generated elephants to date for the film *Jumanji*. While ILM's elephants appeared on the screen for only a matter of seconds, PDI's pachyderms will have to withstand audience scrutiny for 90 minutes.



PDI takes up the CGI elephant gauntlet dropped by ILM's *Jumanji*

1998 Box-office race

KidScreen looks at how 1998 releases fared at home and abroad

Title/Distributor	Weeks in release in U.S. as of 12/31/98	Cume U.S. box office (US\$) as of 12/31/98	Cume international box office (US\$) as of 12/31/98 (when available)
LIVE ACTION			
* <i>Dr. Dolittle</i> /20th Century Fox	25	144.1 million	127.5 million
* <i>Godzilla</i> /Columbia TriStar	16	136.0 million	236.7 million
<i>Lost in Space</i> /New Line	19	69.1 million	
<i>Ever After</i> /20th Century Fox	9	61.4 million	
<i>The Parent Trap</i> /Walt Disney	6	60.4 million	
<i>Small Soldiers</i> /DreamWorks	12	53.9 million	34.7 million
** <i>Star Trek: Insurrection</i> /Paramount	3	47.7 million	
<i>Madeline</i> /Columbia TriStar	14	29.7 million	0.5 million
<i>Paulie</i> /DreamWorks	18	27.0 million	7.0 million
** <i>Jack Frost</i> /Warner Bros.	3	22.5 million	
<i>The Borrowers</i> /PolyGram	13	22.4 million	
** <i>Babe: Pig in the City</i> /Universal	6	15.3 million	
** <i>The Wizard of Oz</i> (reissue)/Warner Bros.	8	14.6 million	
<i>Barney's Great Adventure</i> /PolyGram	13	11.1 million	
** <i>Mighty Joe Young</i> /Walt Disney	1	10.6 million	
<i>Air Bud: Golden Receiver</i> /Miramax	10	10.2 million	
<i>The Mighty</i> /Miramax	6	2.6 million	
ANIMATED			
<i>Mulan</i> /Walt Disney	25	120.8 million	143.1 million
** <i>A Bug's Life</i> /Walt Disney	6	114.4 million	20.5 million
** <i>Antz</i> /DreamWorks	8	86.4 million	70.7 million
** <i>The Rugrats Movie</i> /Paramount	6	80.0 million	
** <i>The Prince of Egypt</i> /DreamWorks	2	40.0 million	42.1 million
<i>Quest for Camelot</i> /Warner Bros.	13	22.7 million	

* indicates the film made the U.S. box-office top 10 for the year
** indicates the film was still playing in the U.S. at press time

Title & Primary Target Audience	Release Date	Storyline (A: animation, CA: computer animation, L: live action, CGI: computer generated images)	Studio & Distributor	Licensing Contact	Promotion Contact	Licensees & Promotional Partners	Visibility-Boosting Additional Media
My Favorite Martian							
Family	February 12, '99	(L) An intergalactic comedy based on the classic TV series, in which an ambitious TV reporter stumbles upon a Martian whose spaceship has crashed on Earth. The cast includes Christopher Lloyd, Jeff Daniels, Daryl Hannah and Elizabeth Hurley.	Walt Disney Pictures, Buena Vista (dist.)	Chuck Champlin, director of communications, Walt Disney Consumer Products, 818-560-5151	Cherise McVicar, VP of national promotions, Buena Vista Pictures Marketing, 818-560-5151	licensees: not announced promo partners: McDonald's	not announced
Babar: King of the Elephants							
Family	staggered release in Canada starting in February '99	(A) The story of Babar, a young elephant who learns that great things are possible if one never gets discouraged. Based on the classic de Brunhoff books.	Nelvana, Home Made Movies S.A. and TMO-Loonland Film GmbH in association with The Clifford Ross Company, distributor Alliance Releasing	Sid Kaufman, executive VP, worldwide merchandising, Nelvana, 213-954-4536	Amy Budinger, VP, The Clifford Ross Company, 212-771-2676	licensees: more than 30, including Friemant International, Gund, Mud Puppy Press, Peaceable Kingdom Press, Takara Co., Publications International promo partners: not announced	HBO Video will release the film as a direct-to-video title in the U.S. in the summer
Doug's 1st Movie							
Family	March 26, '99	(A) Follows Doug from the successful <i>Disney's Doug TV</i> series as he debates whether to fight a mythical monster or take Patti Mayonnaise to the school dance.	Walt Disney Pictures, Buena Vista (dist.)/Jumbo Pictures	Chuck Champlin, director of communications, Walt Disney Consumer Products, 818-560-5151	Cherise McVicar, VP of national promotions, Buena Vista Pictures Marketing, 818-560-5151	licensees: Mattel (master toy), Thinkway Toys, Tiger Electronics promo partners: TBA	Walt Disney Records will release the soundtrack.
The King and I							
Family	Spring '99	(A) The Rodgers and Hammerstein classic in an animated screen adaptation.	Warner Bros., Morgan Creek	Brian Robinson, sr. VP of marketing, Morgan Creek, 818-954-4601	Brian Robinson, sr. VP of marketing, Morgan Creek, 818-954-4601	licensees: Playmates (master toy), Scholastic, Rubie's Costume Co., High Point Knitting, DecoPak, American Royal Arts, Trinity, Warner Bros. Studio Stores, Warner Home Video, Twin Secrets, Solo Industries, Jay Imports, Imagination Unlimited promo partners: Virtual Florist, Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, Subway, America's Choice Foods, J & J Snack Foods, Sweet Factory, Kodak, America Online, Toys 'R' Us	Sound Source Interactive will produce CD-ROMs and electronic games.
Island of the Sharks							
Family	April '99	(L) A 3-D underwater adventure that allows audiences to travel down hidden aquatic highways to witness the frenzied behavior of the ocean's great predator.	Imax Corporation/NOVA/MGBH Boston/Howard Hall Productions	Salemo & Associates, 310-247-1109	Salemo & Associates, 310-247-1109	TBA	TBA
The Mummy							
Teens, adults	May '99	(L/CGI) A <i>Raiders of the Lost Ark</i> -type action adventure, with special effects from Industrial Light & Magic, that follows treasure-seeking explorers in the Sahara in 1925.	Universal Pictures	Tim Rothwell, sr. VP of domestic sales, Universal Studios Consumer Products, 818-777-9001	Lisa Berlin, VP of promotions, Universal Studios Consumer Products, 818-777-2987	licensees: Toy Island (master toy), Fruit of the Loom, Freeze Long King Printing, Western Graphics, Rubie's Costume Co., Top of the Line, Ebury Press, Penguin Putnam, Scholastic, Inkworks, Playing Mantis, Tiger Electronics promo partners: TBA	TBA
The Extreme Adventures of Super Dave							
Teens	May 14, '99	(L) Based on the TV series starring Bob Einstein as daredevil buffoon Super Dave Osborn.	MGM/United Artists	Traci Herbert, director of international licensing, MGM Consumer Products, 310-449-3857	Randy Smith, VP of national promotions, MGM/United Artists, 310-449-3444	TBA	TBA
Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace							
Family	May 21, '99	(L/CGI) This first chapter in the <i>Star Wars</i> saga depicts Darth Vader as a hopeful nine-year-old boy named Anakin Skywalker and Obi-Wan Kenobi as a brash young Jedi Knight.	Lucasfilm and 20th Century Fox	Jim Ward, director of marketing, Lucasfilm, 415-662-1800	Jim Ward, director of marketing, Lucasfilm, 415-662-1800	licensees: Hasbro (master toy), Scholastic, The Lego Group, Nintendo of America promo partners: PepsiCo, Frito-Lay, Tricon (KFC, Taco Bell, Pizza Hut)	TBA
Extreme							
Older kids, family	June '99	(L) Picks up where <i>Everest</i> left off, featuring extreme sports adventure.	Imax Corporation/A Beyer/Lond de Jong Franken Production	Salemo & Associates, 310-247-1109	Salemo & Associates, 310-247-1109	TBA	TBA
Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me							
Teens, adults	June 11, '99	Mike Myers reprises his shaggydelic role, now accepting a mission in the '90s to stop Dr. Evil.	New Line Cinema	Dave Imhoff, executive VP of worldwide licensing and merchandising, New Line Cinema, 212-649-4944	Mary Goss Robino, VP of national promotions, New Line Cinema, 310-967-6585	licensees: more than 20, including Disguise, Halloween Adventure, Kaboom, Changes, Stanley DeSantis, Equity Sports, Mattel, McFarlane, Trendmasters, Ata-Boy promo partners: TBA	TBA

The Bumblebee Flies Anyway

Family	Summer '99	(L) The story of an 18-year-old with amnesia who initiates a covert investigation into his own history.	The Shooting Gallery, Artisan Entertainment	Artisan Entertainment, 310-449-9200	Artisan Entertainment, 310-449-9200	licensees: Bantam promo partners: TBA	TBA
Family	Summer '99	(L) Based on the classic toon, a somewhat naive security guard (played by Matthew Broderick), blown to pieces by the nefarious Dr. Claw, is rebuilt by a sexy scientist utilizing a vast array of grafted-on gizmos, which he uses to save the world.	Walt Disney Pictures, Buena Vista (dist.)	Chuck Champlin, director of communications, Walt Disney Consumer Products, 818-560-5151	Cherise McVicar, VP of national promotions, Buena Vista Pictures Marketing, 818-560-5151	licensees: Mattel (master toy), Hyperion Press, Disney Press, Golden Books Family Entertainment promo partners: McDonald's	Walt Disney Records will release the soundtrack.
Family	Summer '99	(A) Phil Collins provides the music for this animated tale of a human baby orphaned in the African jungle, and lovingly raised by a family of apes. Based on the Edgar Rice Burroughs classic.	Walt Disney Pictures, Buena Vista (dist.)	Chuck Champlin, director of communications, Walt Disney Consumer Products, 818-560-5151	Cherise McVicar, VP of national promotions, Buena Vista Pictures Marketing, 818-560-5151	licensees: about 50, including Mattel (master toy), Thinkway Toys, Disguise, Hedstrom, Rose Art, Hanes, Spinmaster Toys, Johnson & Johnson, Thermos, Springs Industries, Hallmark promo partners: TBA	Walt Disney Records will release the soundtrack.
Family	July '99	(L) Siegfried and Roy visit dangerous white tigers and lions at their wildlife sanctuary home.	Imax Corporation/L2 Entertainment/Lexington Road	J.A. Roth & Associates, 310-453-5005	Salerno & Associates, 310-247-1109	TBA	TBA
All audiences	July 2, '99	(L) Will Smith and Kevin Kline play wily government agents sent to stop a brilliant and diabolical scientist from assassinating the President of the United States.	Warner Bros.	Michelle Sucillon, director of studio licensing, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-6642	Shannon Ryan-Nicosia, director of national promotions, Warner Bros., 818-954-6213	licensees: WB Toys in conjunction with X-Toys, Scholastic, Gibson Greetings, Anagram International, promo partners: TBA	TBA
Family	July 23, '99	(L/puppet) The Muppets get a close encounter of the Gonzo kind, featuring Gonzo, Kermit the Frog, Miss Piggy and Rizzo the Rat.	Sony Pictures Entertainment, The Jim Henson Company	Isabel Miller, executive VP of consumer products worldwide, The Jim Henson Company, 212-794-2400	Dawn Rosenquist, executive director of global/U.S. promotions, Columbia TriStar, 310-244-8801	licensees: Grosset & Dunlap, Golden Books, Western Graphics promo partners: TBA	TBA
Family	August/September '99	(L) A period piece about a young foal adopted by an orphaned stable boy in an African mining town.	Columbia TriStar Pictures	Sony Signatures, 310-244-7788	Stephen Shawred, manager, global U.S. promotions, Columbia TriStar, 310-244-4618	TBA	TBA
Ages 18 to 24	Fourth quarter '99	(A) MTV's sophomore pair head to the big screen for a second time.	MTV Films, Paramount Pictures	Lisa Sifen, VP of consumer products, MTV, 212-258-8000	Lisa DiMarzio, senior VP of worldwide marketing partnerships, Paramount Pictures, 323-956-5377	TBA	TBA
Teens, adults	Fourth quarter '99	(L) An indie family comedy about a runaway foster child who befriends a woman (played by Kathleen Turner), and rides Central Park of a drug gang. Also starring Haney Keitel and Paul Sorvino.	Seagal-Nasso Productions	Seagal-Nasso Productions, 310-248-1040	Seagal-Nasso Productions, 310-248-1040	TBA	TBA
Older kids, family	Fourth quarter '99	(L/CGI) Police constable Ichabod Crane, played by Johnny Depp, travels to the small village of Sleepy Hollow to investigate mysterious killings by the notorious headless horseman.	MTV Films, Paramount Pictures	Lisa Sifen, VP of consumer products, MTV, 212-258-8000	Lisa DiMarzio, senior VP of worldwide marketing partnerships, Paramount Pictures, 323-956-5377	TBA	TBA

"RadarScreen" is a quarterly chart of upcoming kids and teen movies, including details related to their licensing and promotional activities. Questions or materials related to "RadarScreen" should be directed to Virginia Robertson at 323-966-4500.

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LICENSING CONSULTANTS TO MANUFACTURERS

Title & Primary Target Audience	Release Date	Storyline (A: animation, CA: computer animation, L: live action, CGI: computer generated images)	Studio & Distributor	Licensing Contact	Promotion Contact	Licensees & Promotional Partners	Visibility-Boosting Additional Media
Tomb Raider: The Movie Teens, adults	Fourth quarter '99	(L) The bodacious Lara Croft heroine comes to the big screen, and adventurous questing ensues.	MTV Films, Paramount Pictures	Lisa Siffen, VP of consumer products, MTV, 212-258-8000	Lisa DiMarzio, senior VP of worldwide marketing partnerships, Paramount Pictures, 323-956-5377	TBA	TBA
The Adventures of Elmo in Grouchland Family	October '99	(A) The little red-haired guy from <i>Sesame Street</i> heads to the big screen.	Sony Pictures Entertainment, Children's Television Workshop	Ann Kerns, VP of licensing, Children's Television Workshop, 212-595-3456	Dawn Rosenquist, executive director of global/U.S. promotions, Columbia TriStar, 310-244-8801	TBA	TBA
The Road to El Dorado Family	November '99	(A) Set in the year 1519, the film recounts the comic misadventures of a pair of roguish small-time con artists who inadvertently stow away to the New World.	DreamWorks SKG	Travis Rutherford, head of licensing, DreamWorks Consumer Products, 818-733-7000	Anne Giangardella, head of promotions, DreamWorks Consumer Products, 818-733-7000	TBA	TBA
Dudley Do-Right Family	Thanksgiving '99	(L) An adaptation of the cartoon surrounding a mountain's travails battling Snidely Whiplash. Brendan Fraser and Sarah Jessica Parker star.	Universal Pictures	Tim Rothwell, sr. VP of domestic sales, Universal Studios Consumer Products, 818-777-9001	Lisa Berlin, VP of promotions, Universal Studios Consumer Products, 818-777-2987	licensees: TBA promo partners: Universal Studios theme park attraction ride Ripshaw Falls	Universal's new media, home video and music divisions will tie in.
Curious George Family	December '99	(L) The inquisitive ward of the man with the big yellow hat checks out theaters.	Imagine Entertainment, Universal Pictures	Tim Rothwell, sr. VP of domestic sales, Universal Studios Consumer Products, 818-777-9001	Lisa Berlin, VP of promotions, Universal Studios Consumer Products, 818-777-2987	licensees: Equity Toys (master toy), Berk Corp., Disguise, Hedstrom, Manley Toy Quest, Tiger Electronics, Every Picture Tells a Story, Alexander Doll, GT Publishing, Everything Kids, Landoll, American Greetings, Sony Signatures, ACI, Zak Designs, Houghton-Mifflin, Penguin Putnam, FX Schmid, Learning Curve promo partners: Kmart	Golden Books Home Video clay animation videos
Stuart Little Family	December '99	(L/CGI) The heartwarming classic comes to the big screen, directed by Rob Minkoff (<i>The Lion King</i>) and starring Michael J. Fox, Geena Davis and Gene Wilder.	Sony Pictures Entertainment	Anita Frazier, VP of sales, Sony Signatures, 310-244-6897	Dawn Rosenquist, executive director of global/U.S. promotions, Columbia TriStar, 310-244-8801	licensees: Hasbro (master toy), Hasbro Interactive, Learning Curve, HarperCollins, Milton Bradley promo partners: TBA	Hasbro Interactive will produce interactive electronic games.
The Grinch Kids ages two to 11, family	Christmas '99	(L) Ron Howard directs Jim Carrey in this big-budget story of the creature with a heart two sizes too small. Fah who for-aze! Dah who dor-aze...	Universal Pictures, Imagine Films	Tim Rothwell, sr. VP of domestic sales, Universal Studios Consumer Products, 818-777-9001	Lisa Berlin, VP of promotions, Universal Studios Consumer Products, 818-777-2987	TBA	TBA
Toy Story 2 Family	Holiday '99	(CA) The sequel to the computer-animated blockbuster (reprising all of the original's voice talent), in which Andy goes to summer camp and the toys are left alone to face off against an obsessive toy collector.	Walt Disney Pictures, Buena Vista (dist.)	Chuck Champlin, director of communications, Walt Disney Consumer Products, 818-560-5151	Cherise McVicar, VP of national promotions, Buena Vista Pictures Marketing, 818-560-5151	licensees: Mattel (master toy) promo partners: TBA	TBA
Fantasia 2000 Family	New Year's Eve '99	(A/CGI) Walt Disney's 1940 experiment in sight and sound continues, as a new generation of Disney animators and filmmakers visually interpret compositions by Beethoven, Shostakovich, Stravinski and others.	Walt Disney Pictures, Buena Vista (dist.)	Chuck Champlin, director of communications, Walt Disney Consumer Products, 818-560-5151	Cherise McVicar, VP of national promotions, Buena Vista Pictures Marketing, 818-560-5151	TBA	TBA
The Iron Giant Family	1999	(CA) A star-studded voice cast renders this teen version of Ted Hughes's acclaimed novel about a giant who arrives in a small town in Maine and makes friends with a young boy.	Warner Bros.	Jordan Sollitto, VP of promotions and branded foods, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-1889	Tyler Turquand, senior promotions representative, Warner Bros., 818-954-6167	licensees: Trendmasters (master toy) promo partners: TBA	TBA
The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle Family	2000	(A) The millennium rings in with another dynamic TV duo—moose und squirrel—hitting the big screen.	Universal Pictures	Tim Rothwell, sr. VP of domestic sales, Universal Studios Consumer Products, 818-777-9001	Lisa Berlin, VP of promotions, Universal Studios Consumer Products, 818-777-2987	TBA	TBA

Chicken Run

Family
2000

(A) A comedy adventure surrounding a group of chickens making a desperate bid for freedom before they can be fried, filleted or fricasseed. Aardman gives all those Y2K survivalist refugees a reason to come back to civilization.

Aardman Animations, DreamWorks SKG, Pathe (European dist.)

Travis Rutherford, head of licensing, DreamWorks Consumer Products, 818-733-7000

Anne Giangardella, head of promotions, DreamWorks Consumer Products, 818-733-7000

TBA

Fool on the Hill

Teens, adults
2000

(L) Reformed Grinch Jim Carrey stars in this comedy based on the British TV series *Taking Over the Asylum*, about an aspiring DJ who starts a radio station at a mental institution.

MGM/United Artists, Orion Pictures, MGM Distribution Co.

Traci Herbert, director of international licensing, MGM Consumer Products, 310-449-3857

Randy Smith, VP of national promotions, MGM/United Artists, 310-449-3444

TBA

Planet Ice

Family
2000

(A) Fox Animation's sci-fi epic about a 19-year-old boy, voiced by Matt Damon, saving the earth after an alien attack

20th Century Fox

Michael Malone, VP of worldwide sales, 20th Century Fox Licensing & Merchandising, 310-369-3243

Steve Ross, sr. VP of worldwide promotions, 20th Century Fox Licensing & Merchandising, 310-369-3199

TBA

Shrek

Family
2000

(CGI) A "fractured fairy tale" based on the William Steig children's book about an ugly ogre looking for a place in the world and someone to share it with.

DreamWorks SKG, PDI

Travis Rutherford, head of licensing, DreamWorks Consumer Products, 818-733-7000

Anne Giangardella, head of promotions, DreamWorks Consumer Products, 818-733-7000

TBA

Spirit

Family
2000

(A) An animated Western told from a horse's point of view.

DreamWorks SKG

Travis Rutherford, head of licensing, DreamWorks Consumer Products, 818-733-7000

Anne Giangardella, head of promotions, DreamWorks Consumer Products, 818-733-7000

TBA

Frankenstein

Teens, family
Halloween
2000

(CGI) The familiar 70-year-old monster's comeback will be enhanced by digital effects, but the monster will remain sympathetic thanks to his "eyes of a man."

Universal Pictures, Industrial Light & Magic

Tim Rothwell, sr. VP of domestic sales, Universal Studios Consumer Products, 818-777-9001

Lisa Berlin, VP of promotions, Universal Studios Consumer Products, 818-777-2987

TBA

Lord of the Rings

Kids, teens, adults
Christmas
2000

(U/C/GI) The first of a three-part big-screen adaptation of J. R. R. Tolkien's seminal classic book series *The Lord of the Rings*.

New Line Cinema

Dave Imhoff, executive VP of worldwide licensing & merchandising, New Line Cinema, 212-649-4944

Mary Goss Robino, VP of national promotions, New Line Cinema, 310-967-6585

TBA

Kingdom of the Sun

Family
2001

(A) Loosely based on the classic story *The Prince and the Pauper*, David Spade voices an Incan prince who discovers his double, who is a farmer.

Walt Disney Pictures, Buena Vista (dist.)

Chuck Champlin, director of national promotions, Buena Vista Pictures Marketing, 818-560-5151

TBA

Cambium

Cecchi Gori Group

Cinar

Davis Entertainment/Sky Productions

DIC Films

DreamWorks SKG

Fox Family Films/Storyopolis

Imax

Medialab/Ciné-Groupe

MGM/UA

Miramax

MTV Films

New Line Cinema

North and South Film, London/

Cineplex Odeon

• Eli's Coming (L)
• The Story of a Seagull and the Cat That Taught Her to Fly (A)
• Who Gets the House (L)
• Pippin (A)
• Sailor Moon (L)
• Tusker (CA) • The Cat in the Hat (U/C/GI)
• Red Ranger Came Calling (U/CA)
• R.L. Stine's The Beast (U/3-D large format)
• Gulliver's Travels (U/3-D large format, co-production with Mainframe Entertainment)
• Pinocchio 3001 (CA) • Sphinx@Com (CA)
• The Pink Panther (L)
• The Munchies (L, co-production with Davis Entertainment)
• The Adventures of Tom Thumb and Thumbelina (A)
• Election (L)
• Lord of the Rings Trilogy, 2 and 3 (U/C/GI)
• Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fang (L)

Paramount Pictures/Nickelodeon Movies

Renn Productions/Bavaria Film GmbH/Films 7/President Films

Scholastic

Sony Pictures

Spooky House Productions

Touchstone Pictures

20th Century Fox

Unapix Films

Universal Pictures

Walt Disney Pictures

Warner Bros.

• Bone (A) • Rugrats II (A) • Stinky Cheese Man (A)
• Prometheus and Bob (L) • Rube Goldberg Project (L)
• How to Eat Fried Worms (L, co-production with Imagine Entertainment)
• Hey Arnold! Feature (A)
• Asterix and Obelix vs. Caesar (L)
• Goosebumps (L, co-production with Fox)
• The Golden Compass (L) • Stellanina (A)
• untitled project with Adam Sandler (A)
• Spooky House (L)
• Ten Things I Hate About You (L)
• Monkey Bone (A) • Sinbad: Beyond the Veil of Mists (A)
• Our Friend Martin (L) • Dracula (A) • Fenwick's Suit (L)
• My Brother the Pig (L)
• Alvin & the Chipmunks (A) • prequel to The Flintstones (L)
• The Nutty Professor II (L) • Rocket Boys (L)
• Treasure Planet (A) • Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego? (L)
• Marco Polo: Return to Xanadu (A) • prequel to Who Framed Roger Rabbit? (U/C/GI) • The Sixth Sense (L) • Atlantis (A)
• Dinosaurs (U/CA)
• The Superman Project (L)* • The Incredible Mr. Limpet (L)*
*titles not confirmed by Warner Bros.

People in new jobs

Applause (Woodland Hills, California, 818-992-6000): **Pat Pattison** is the new director of strategic alliances. Pattison will be responsible for new business development.

BBC Worldwide (London, England, 44-181-576-2000): **Colin Jarvis** has been named director of programming and operations for international television at the BBC. He will oversee BBC Worldwide's television investments. Also, **Elaine Sperber**, formerly head of drama at Buena Vista Productions, has been named executive producer of drama for BBC Production, children's programs.

BKN (New York, New York, 212-213-2700): **Veronique Angelino** was promoted to senior VP, worldwide licensing and developing.

CBS Television (New York, New York, 212-975-4321): **Jim McKairnes** has been promoted from director to VP of program planning and scheduling.

Discovery Communications (Bethesda, Maryland, 301-986-1999): **David Falcone** is the new director, advertising and promotion at Discovery Digital Networks.

Disney Channel (Burbank, California, 818-569-7500): **Thom Noble**, formerly regional VP of Pierre Smirnoff Company, has been named U.K. marketing director. He replaces **Mike Spencer**, who left to start up a consulting firm.

Expand Images (Monte Carlo, Monaco, 377-93-30-23-01): **Veronique Perrin** has joined as senior brand manager of Expand Licensing. She formerly headed up publishing sales at BBC Worldwide France.

Hasbro (Pawtucket, Rhode Island, 401-431-8697): **Herbert Baum** has been named president and COO of Hasbro. Baum was formerly chairman and CEO of Quaker State Corporation, and executive VP of Campbell's Soup Company.

HIT Entertainment (London, England, 44-171-224-1717): In a drive to increase revenue from licensing and merchandising, **Norman Walker** has been appointed to HIT's board as a non-executive director. He was formerly chairman and COO of K'NEX International and president of Hasbro International.

itsy bitsy Entertainment Company (New York, New York, 212-989-3660): **Ilissa Howard** has joined as associate marketing manager, children's entertainment. Previously with Nickelodeon's consumer products division, Howard will now oversee the areas of social expressions, gifts and collectibles for itsy bitsy licenses like Teletubbies, Noddy and Animal Shelf. **Leslie Hoffman** has also come aboard as associate marketing manager, children's entertainment, working in the toy division. Prior to joining, Hoffman was product development coordinator at Disney Consumer Products. Within itsy bitsy's existing children's entertainment department, **Brigitte Occhi** was promoted to marketing manager, children's apparel and accessories, domestics and housewares and social expressions, and **Laura Spector** was upped to associate marketing manager, toys.

National Geographic Society (Washington, D.C., 202-857-7000): **Linda Berkeley** has been named executive VP of National Geographic Ventures, a separate entity that manages all for-profit initiatives for Nat Geo's television, interactive and maps departments. Formerly the chairman of MCA's merchandising groups and senior VP, business development/corporate marketing at MCA Inc., Berkeley is now responsible for managing NG's newly formed licensing and merchandising division, the Enterprises Group.

Nelvana (Toronto, Canada, 416-588-5571): **Patricia Burns**, formerly supervising producer at Nelvana's Toronto-based studio, has been promoted to VP, production at Nelvana Enterprises (Paris). Burns is now responsible for the supervision and planning of all Canadian-European co-productions.

New Line Video (New York, New York, 212-649-4900): **Michael Mulvihill** has been named executive director of home video production and DVD development. He is the former director of operations at New Line.

Pearson Television North America (New York, New York, 212-541-2800): **Richard Mann** is the new senior VP of creative services at Pearson Television. He will oversee marketing and promotional development of all Pearson syndicated programming.

Penguin U.K. (London, England, 44-171-938-2200): **Margie Chan** has been promoted to VP, U.S. brand management for Frederick Warne, Penguin's classic character division. She is responsible for managing a new team to support Warne's properties in the U.S. market.

PBS Home Video (Alexandria, Virginia, 703-739-5000): **Jonathan Siegel** is the new director of retail marketing at PBS Home Video. He will oversee the promotion and retail marketing of PBS videos.

Primetime Television Associates (London, England, 44-171-935-9000): **Jayne Pitts**, formerly international sales manager at EMAP-owned *TV World*, has been named deputy head of TV program sales at Southern Star-owned distributor Primetime.

Scholastic (New York, New York, 212-343-6100): **Katherine Evans**, formerly president of her own consulting firm, has been named director of video marketing and distribution.

Licensing comes home to TVS

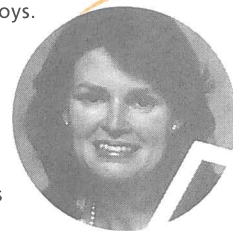
BY VIRGINIA ROBERTSON

Licensing and merchandising of television programs has been taken in-house at Florida's Television Syndication Company (TVS), and the effort will be headed up by newly appointed director of licensing, Susan Aloisio, with TVS since 1996, will oversee licensing efforts for the TVS syndicated slate, which includes *Reel Planet* (the company's most widely distributed show, reaching 60% of the U.S. market), *The Coolwallas*, *Waiting for Christmas* and *Coots & Critter*.

While no licensing efforts for *Coolwallas* and *Waiting for Christmas* have been undertaken in the past, the other properties' licensing programs were formerly contracted out to the International Licensing Partners firm. According to Bob Yde, director of marketing at TVS, moving licensing in-house allows smoother coordination between production, distribution and release of product vis a vis the broadcast schedule. "The more facets you can control the better your chances for [licensing] success are."

Aloisio will spearhead a full-blown licensing campaign for *Waiting for Christmas*, in addition to overseeing the development of a campaign for *Coots & Critter* at Licensing Show '99 in June. As the latter series grew out of a TV special, a few prior licenses exist. In developing the series, TVS aimed to target an older demographic. "What we tried to do was expand [the property] to reach kids and teens and adults," Yde says. "We also moved the characters from the swamp to the big city." Yde notes that this will affect what licenses are pursued for *Coots & Critter*.

The company will be adding new shows to their slate—co-productions with European producers on international properties that will be produced for the domestic market through TVS's production arm, White Mountain Entertainment.



Sony Corporation of America (New York, New York, 212-833-6000): **Howard Stringer** has been named chairman and CEO of Sony Corporation of America, **Thomas Mottola** has been named chairman and CEO of Sony Music Entertainment and **John Calley** takes the chairman and CEO reins at Sony Pictures Entertainment.

Sony Signatures Licensing (Culver City, California, 310-244-7788): Recent promotions at Sony Signatures include: **Sharon Sartorius** to executive director of business affairs and counsel, **Marci Gordon** to executive director of licensing, and **Liz Tenney** to manager of international licensing. As well, **Adam Langsbard** has been appointed director of marketing, **Christiane Friess** has been hired as creative director, and **Evan Greene** has been appointed manager of product development and promotions.

Sony Wonder (New York, New York, 212-833-8100): **Laura Sullivan** is the new senior director, marketing at Sony Wonder. She was formerly senior director of children's marketing at PolyGram Video.

The WB Television Network (Burbank, California, 818-977-5000): **Susanne Daniels** has signed a five-year contract with The WB as president, entertainment. Daniels, who is also responsible for Kids WB!, named **Jordan Levin** as executive VP, programming, the position she previously held. Daniels will take over from **Garth Ancier**, who chose not to renew his contract.

THQ (Calabasas, California, 818-223-3116): Former director **Jeffrey Lapin** is the new vice chairman of the interactive entertainment software company. **Steve Ryno** is the new chief creative officer and **Michael Rubinelli** has joined as VP, product development. **Tiffany TERNAN** has been promoted from national sales manager to VP of sales.

Uncle Milton Industries (Westlake Village, California, 818-707-0800): **Ravi Patel** has been named VP, operations and chief financial officer of the toy company responsible for producing toy lines inspired by Disney/Pixar's *A Bug's Life*. Also, **Scott Rubenstein** has been named national sales manager.

Universal Studios (Universal City, California, 818-777-1000): **Stacey Snider** is the new president of production at Universal. She formerly held the same position at TriStar Pictures. Additionally, former senior VP of production at TriStar **Kevin Misher** is the new co-president, production.

Walt Disney Company (Burbank, California, 818-560-1000): **Chris Pula** has been named president of Buena Vista Pictures Marketing. He is the former head of theatrical marketing at Warner Bros. **Laszlo Cebrian** has been named VP and managing director of Walt Disney Company in Germany. Cebrian will also retain his former position as managing director for Disney in Spain and Portugal. Finally, **Judson Green** has been appointed chairman of the newly formed

Walt Disney Attractions unit. Green, formerly head of the theme park and resorts segment, has named **Paul Pressler** as president of the unit.

Warner Bros. (Burbank, California, 818-954-6000): **Jodi Nesis** has been named VP, corporate strategic planning and development. She will be responsible for developing strategic initiatives and business relationships with Warner's television divisions. As well, **Ricky Mintz** has been named to the newly created position of senior VP at Warner's in-house creative advertising agency, The Idea Place.

Warner Bros. Consumer Products (Burbank, California, 818-954-7890): **Howard Kreitzman** has been appointed executive VP, merchandising for Warner Bros. Studio Stores. He was formerly senior VP, general merchandise manager at DFS Merchandising.

Warner Bros. International Television (Burbank, California, 818-954-4068): **Lisa Gregorian** is the new senior VP of marketing at Warner Bros. International Television Distribution. She is responsible for all advertising, promotion, program publicity and research for the division.



Varga restructures to direct growth

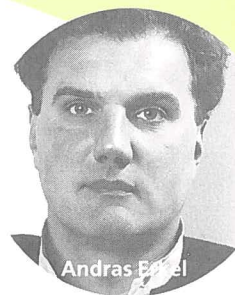
BY DUNCAN HOOD

Following two years of rapid growth, the holding company for Budapest's Varga Studio and London's VARGA tv is restructuring and changing its name from Eurotoon to Varga Holdings. The restructuring centers around the appointments of Varga Studio co-founder Andras Erkel as CEO, and of Jan Sawkins, formerly joint managing director of TEAM plc and owner of a consulting firm, as group managing director. "1998 was a very significant year for Varga in that it has consolidated its position internally, reorganized and restructured, and thought long and hard about its business strategy to cope with the growth in its business and its profile," says Sawkins. This growth has resulted in the number of hours of animation produced annually by the two Varga studios increasing from three in 1996 to nine in 1998, with 13 hours commissioned for the coming year. Sawkins adds that Varga's 1998 revenue was double that for 1997, and she expects to see it double again for 1999.

The company's original studio in Budapest is best known for its animation work on the HIT Entertainment/Grand Slam Children's Films co-production *Kipper* and an award-winning half-hour *Animaniacs* special. It has also recently been commissioned to animate HIT's *Percy the Park Keeper* series. Sawkins adds that the studio "has just produced a pilot and has been commissioned to do an additional four episodes for the first Warner Bros. prime-time animated sitcom called *Baby Blues*," slated for broadcast later this year.

VARGA tv, established in 1997, recently completed its first project, a TV special co-produced with Miramax and ZDF called *Oi! Get Off Our Train*. The special was based on the John Burningham book of the same name, and aired on the BBC at Christmas. The studio is now working on a direct-to-video adaptation of Golden Books' *The Poky Little Puppy*, slated to be delivered in April, as well as a new Grand Slam/Tiger Aspect co-production called *Bosom Pals*.

Sawkins attributes Varga's recent growth to its ability to produce a wide variety of animation styles, from stop-motion to CGI, and its diversification into service work, co-productions and commercials. She says she will continue the focus on growth in the coming years, with an eye on moving towards more production, marketing and rights ownership. To this end, Varga established a marketing department last November, headed by Szusza Kirsch, and is currently developing its first independent production, to be called *Preston Pig*.



Jan Sawkins

Please send your people news with

photo to Duncan Hood at *KidScreen*, People in New Jobs,

366 Adelaide St. West, Suite 500, Toronto, Ont., Canada, M5V 1R9; fax: 416-408-0870;

e-mail: dhood@brunico.com.

How to reach

SOME OF THE KEY COMPANIES IN THIS ISSUE

ABC Radio Networks New York, New York	212-735-1739	The Jim Henson Company New York, New York	212-794-2400	Sony Music Video New York, New York	212-833-8000
Adams Media Research Carmel, California	831-659-3070	Kid Kulture Los Angeles, California	323-936-7671	Sony Signatures Culver City, California	310-280-7788
American Specialty Toy Retailing Association Des Moines, Iowa	515-282-8192	Kinderkanal Erfurt, Germany	49-361-218-0	Sony Wonder New York, New York	212-833-8100
Bandai Entertainment Cyprus, California	714-816-9760	Kids' WB! Burbank, California	818-954-7670	Super RTL Cologne, Germany	49-221-9155-100
Blockbuster Entertainment Dallas, Texas	214-854-3000	The Learning Company Cambridge, Massachusetts	617-494-1200	Teletoon Toronto, Canada	416-956-2030
Brio Germantown, Wisconsin	414-250-3240	Learning Curve Elke Grove Village, Illinois	847-860-2477	Teletoon France Paris, France	33-1-41-33-8980
Britt Allcroft New York, New York	212-463-9623	Legoland California Carlsbad, California	760-918-5300	Téléfiction Montreal, Canada	514-499-0972
Cartoon Network Atlanta, Georgia	404-885-2263	Lucasfilm San Rafael, California	415-662-1800	The Television Syndication Company Longwood, Florida	407-788-6407
CDC United Network Brussels, Belgium	32-2-502-6640	Mattel El Segundo, California	310-252-3507	TF1 Boulogne, France	33-1-41-41-3400
Children's Television Workshop New York, New York	212-595-3456	Microsoft Corporation Redmond, Washington	425-882-8080	Tiger Electronics Vernon Hills, Illinois	847-913-8100
Cinar Films Montreal, Canada	514-843-7070	Monster Distributes Kilcoole, Ireland	353-1-287-1167	Toy Island Manufacturing Company Long Island, New York	516-364-3050
Columbia TriStar Home Video Culver City, California	310-277-4000	MTV New York, New York	212-258-8000	Toys 'R' US Paramus, New Jersey	201-262-7800
Disney Channel Burbank, California	818-569-7500	The NPJ Group Port Washington, New York	516-625-0700	Universal Consumer Products Universal City, California	818-777-5391
Disney Studios Burbank, California	818-560-1000	Nielsen Media Research New York, New York	(212) 708-7500	Universal Studios Home Video Universal City, California	818-777-1000
DreamWorks SKG Universal City, California	818-733-7000	Nelvana Toronto, Canada	416-588-5571	Varga Holdings Budapest, Hungary	36-1-436-1717
FAO Schwarz New York, New York	212-644-9410	New Line Cinema New York, New York	212-649-4900	Viacom Retail Group/Blockbuster Entertainment Dallas, Texas	214-854-3000
Fox Family Worldwide Los Angeles, California	310-235-5100	Nickelodeon New York, New York	212-258-7500	V.I.P. Paris, France	33-1-44-70-7300
Fox Kids Countdown Los Angeles, California	310-235-9655	Noggin New York, New York	212-846-6121	The Vivid Group Toronto, Canada	416-340-9290
France Animation Paris, France	33-1-53-35-9082	Pacific Data Images Palo Alto, California	650-846-8100	The Walt Disney Company Burbank, California	818-560-5151
France 2 Paris, France	33-1-45-80-4771	Pangea Corporation Dana Point, California	949-443-0666	Warner Bros. Studios Burbank, California	818-954-6000
The Geppetto Group New York, New York	212-462-8140	Playmates Costa Mesa, California	714-428-2000	Warner Home Video Burbank, California	818-954-6000
Giochi Preziosi Cogliate, Italy	39-0-2-964-751	Porchlight Entertainment Los Angeles, California	310-477-8400	Wink'n Blink'n & Nod West Seneca, New York	716-674-3058
Griffin Bacal New York, New York	212-415-2900	Radio Disney Burbank, California	818-973-4084	YMS Consulting Glendale, California	818-241-8115
Hasbro Pawtucket, Rhode Island	401-431-8697	Roper Starch Worldwide New York, New York	212-878-1400	The Zandl Group New York, New York	212-274-1222
Henry Bear's Park Cambridge, Massachusetts	617-547-8424	Saban International Los Angeles, California	310-235-5100	Zany Brains Wynnewood, Pennsylvania	610-896-1500
Irwin Toys Toronto, Canada	416-533-3521	Scholastic Entertainment New York, New York	212-343-6100	Zellers Toronto, Canada	905-792-4400
itsy bitsy Entertainment Company New York, New York	212 989-3660	Sonoma Entertainment Santa Monica, California	310-581-9470		

The Way Kids Are

As global borders in the kids entertainment world continue to fade, France's licensing pioneer, Jean Michel Biard, ponders the future cachet-potential of European properties.

Not so far to row...

Believe it or not, my daughter Aude is a beautiful child and a brilliant pupil. When she turned 12, she hung a large poster in her room showing Snoopy rowing, with a caption reading, "Is America far away?" Then she bought, with her own pocket money, a beautiful pair of Snoopy blue jeans. Twenty years later, she lives in Oak Park, near Chicago, is a mother of four children...and coincidentally, I have the privilege of licensing Snoopy in France.

Sophie also lives in Oak Park. She is eight, she is beautiful, brilliant, etc., and she is my granddaughter. I am not seven anymore, I live in Paris and I am not beautiful, but I like traveling, especially when all the roads lead to Chicago. Last February, I brought Sophie a wonderful French princess costume. She was so happy that she promised she would wear it for Halloween. However, last October she decided to forget about her promise and chose to be Pocahontas instead of an anonymous princess, however wonderful.

Sophie and her three brothers are only allowed to watch TV at home, and exclusively with parental supervision. Together they watch a lot of videos, read a lot of books, etc. Their heroes are Luke Skywalker, the 101 Dalmatians, Curious George, Indiana Jones, Berenstain Bears, Miss Frizzle, Arthur, Raggedy Ann and Andy and, of course, the French elephant Babar. Even though they are not avid TV viewers, they are pushing Dad, Mom and Grandpa to buy licensed products tout-ing their heroes: light sabers, backpacks, shoes and T-shirts—you name it!

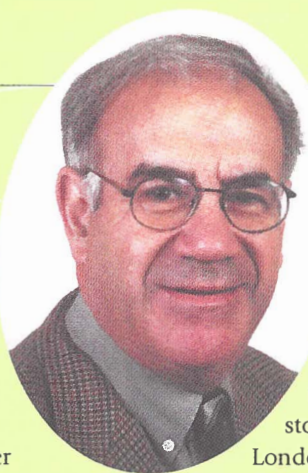
Licensing for a kid (and also for a grown-up) is kind of a personal relationship with a dream. Books require a

more "active" use of imagination, as opposed to "passive" television, so it is not surprising that famous characters from books comprise a wonderful content source for television, direct-to-video and consequently, for licensing. It has proven to be a reliable route for Nelvana, which bought the Canadian publisher Kids Can Press last August, and Scholastic, which has produced many TV series based upon book series including *Goosebumps* and *Animorphs*.

This bodes well for Europe, which harbors an incredible wealth of famous "sleeper" characters. Many European book and comic publishers are developing portfolios of characters through multimedia—among these are Dorling-Kindersley in the U.K., Egmont in Scandinavia, Dargaud in France and Bertelsman, the German publishing company that increased its standing late last year by purchasing Random House. It was also interesting during last September's Cartoon Forum in Greece to see how many European TV series projects were based on characters from publishing.

The growth of European television animation over the last decade has been phenomenal, and also signals optimism for more of these book heroes to hit TV screens. While Europe produced only 60 hours of animation in 1986, 10 years later, that figure jumped to 700 hours, representing 45% of the worldwide production.

And as the number of co-productions between countries continues to



grow, an easier pan-European fiscal framework is being ushered in. Since January 1st, the Euro has become the only European currency to be quoted at the stock markets of London, Frankfurt, Paris and Milan, and all business in Europe is now being conducted in this new currency.

In the middle of the worldwide financial crisis, the entertainment industry in Europe remains reasonably secure. TV co-production and the licensing business that has sprung up with the U.S. should further strengthen this stability.

Soon, the European princess costume will have a greater shot at achieving licensing cachet and competing with its American counterparts. The world is becoming a little village. By the way, I have another grandchild, born in Buenos Aires and currently living in Sao Paulo, who turned one in November. Which dream will she be rowing towards when she turns 12?

Jean Michel Biard is founder and president of V.I.P. Licensing, a Paris-based company that started 31 years ago as a licensing company, but recently launched a television arm called V.I.P. Television. A leader in the European licensing business since 1964, Biard's licensing credits include Snoopy, Dilbert, Zorro, Goosebumps, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, The Pink Panther and many others.

Do you have any anecdotes or experiences with children that give professional insight into kids' likes and dislikes, needs and desires? If so, and you would like write about it, please contact West Coast editor Virginia Robertson at 323-966-4500, or email: vrobertson@brunico.com

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Calendar of Events

Event	Date	Location	Phone	E-mail/Web	Industry
Nuremburg Toy Fair	Feb. 4-10	Nuremburg, Germany	49-911-998130	—	Toys/Games/Elec
Cartoon Movie	Feb. 7-9	Potsdam, Germany	32-2-245-1200 (Belgium)	cartoon@skynet.be	Anim/Film
American International Toy Fair	Feb. 8-15	New York, NY	212-675-1141	www.toy-tma.com	Toys/Games/Elec
Brussels Cartoon & Animated Film Fest	Feb. 8-21	Brussels, Belgium	32-2-534-4125	folioscope@skynet.be	Film/Anim
MILIA	Feb. 9-12	Cannes, France	33-1-41-90-4400	www.milia.com	Inter/MM
Berlin Film Festival—Kinderfilmfest	Feb. 10-21	Berlin, Germany	49-30-254-89 Ext. 262	www.berlinale.cde	Film
Supershow	Feb. 12-15	Atlanta, GA	305-893-8771	supershow@aol.com	Sports
Monte Carlo Television Festival	Feb. 21-24	Monte Carlo, Monaco	201-869-4022 (U.S.)	vitcom@usa.com	Dist/Prod
In-School Marketing '99	Feb. 24-26	Orlando, FL	800-882-8684	www.iqpc.com	Marketing
American Film Market	Feb. 25-March 1	Santa Monica, CA	310-446-1000	www.afma.com	Film
Magic International—Fall/Winter	March 1-4	Las Vegas, NV	818-593-5000	www.magiconline.com	Apparel
Retailing to Kids and Teens Conference	March 4-5	Scottsdale, AZ	416-408-2300 (Canada)	www.kidscreen.com	Promotions
ASIFA-Hollywood Animation Expo	March 5-6	Glendale, CA	818-842-8330	www.asifa.com	Animation
Software Publishers Assoc. Spring Symposium	March 6-9	Los Angeles, CA	202-452-1600	chochberg@spa.org	Pub/MM
Interactive Entertainment Merchants Assoc. Conference	March 8-10	Palm Springs, CA	203-761-6150	www.theiema.org	Inter/MM
NARM Conv. (Nat'l Assoc. Recording Merchandisers)	March 8-11	Las Vegas, NV	609-596-2221	www.narm.com	Merch/MM
Kidzworld EXPO	March 12-14	Arlington Heights, IL	847-520-7962	www.parentsworldkidsworld.com	Toys/Games
PROMAX & BDA Europe	March 15-16	Prague, Czechoslovakia	310-788-7600 (U.S.)	www.promax.org	TV/ Promo/MM
Computer Game Developers' Conference	March 15-19	Long Beach, CA	415-905-2265	www.gdconf.com	Inter/MM
Dallas Super Market/Toy Show	March 20-23	Dallas, TX	214-655-6100	www.dallasmarketcenter.com	Toy/Gam/Gift/Nvltly
ICTI World Toy Conference	March 21-23	Tokyo, Japan	212-675-1141 (U.S.)	safety@toy-tma.org	Toys/Games
Sportel America	March 22-25	Miami Beach, FL	201-869-4022	vitcom@usa.com	Prod/Dist
International Film Festival for Young People	March 22-April 1	Laon, France	33-3-23-79-3937	—	Film
Worldwide Licensing Exposition	March 23-25	Munich, Germany	212-575-4510 (U.S.)	—	Lic/Merch
Braincamp	March 25-26	New York, NY	516-593-5494	www.kidsentertainment.com	Lic/Mktg
Bologna Children's Book Fair	April 8-11	Bologna, Italy	39-51-282-361	—	Publishing
Sprockets (Children's International Film Festival)	April 10-18	Toronto, Canada	416-934-3281	www.bell.ca/filmfest	Film
MIP-TV	April 12-17	Cannes, France	33-1-41-90-4400	www.mipcom.com	Prod/Dist
NAVD Trade Conference	April 17-22	Palm Springs, CA	502-926-6002	—	Video/Dist/Mktg
COMDEX Spring	April 19-22	Chicago, IL	781-449-6600	www.comdex.com	Toys/Games/Elect
Consumer Kids	April 21-23	Bar Harbour, FL	888-670-8200	www.iir-ny.com	Marketing
Kid Power '99	April 26-28	Orlando, FL	800-882-8684	www.iqpc.com	Marketing
Book Expo America (American Booksellers Assoc.)	April 30-May 2	Los Angeles, CA	800-840-5614	www.bookexpo.reedexpo.com	Publishing
Nickelodeon Kids Choice Awards	May 1	New York, New York	212-258-8000	www.nickelodeon.com	TV
Cannes International Film Festival	May 12-23	Cannes, France	33-1-45-61-6600	www.festival-cannes.fr	Film
Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3)	May 13-15	Los Angeles, CA	800-315-1133	www.e3expo.com	Toys/Games/Elect
Summit 2000: Children, Youth and the Media	May 13-17	Toronto, Canada	416-515-0466	www.summit2000.com	Prod/Dist/TV/MM/Vid
L.A. Screenings	May 23-30	Los Angeles, CA	310-277-3000	—	TV
Star Power	May 24-26	Los Angeles, CA	212-420-1100	www.pmalink.org	Promotions
Anney International Film Festival and Market	May 31-June 5	Anney, France	33-4-50-10-0900	info@anney98.com	Film
Digital Kids Forum	June 7-8	San Francisco, CA	800-610-5921	www.jup.com/events/forums	MM
Licensing 99 International	June 8-10	New York, NY	203-256-4700	www.licensingshow.com	Lic/Merch
PROMAX & BDA Conference & Exposition	June 9-12	San Francisco, CA	310-788-7600	www.promax.org	TV/ Promo/MM
Nashville Independent Film Festival	June 9-13	Nashville, TN	615-742-2500	www.nashvillefilmfestival.com	Film
Cable '99 (National Cable Television Assoc.)	June 13-16	Chicago, IL	202-775-3669	www.ncta.com	TV Prod
Banff Television Festival	June 13-19	Banff, Canada	403-678-9260	www.banfftvfest.com	TV
Dallas Super Market/Toy Show	June 24-July 1	Dallas, TX	214-655-6100	www.dallasmarketcenter.com	Toys/Games
Agora '99	June 25-29	Cyprus, Greece	357-2-77-55-96	www.options.com.cy	TV
VSDA (Video Software Dealers Assoc.) Convention	July 8-10	Los Angeles, CA	818-385-1500	www.vsdas.org	Video
NSGA World Sports Expo	July 9-11	Chicago, IL	847-439-4000	www.nsgachicago.com	Sports
Comic Book Expo	Aug. 10-11	San Diego, CA	619-544-9555	www.comic-con.org	Publishing
Magic International—Spring/Summer	Aug. 30-Sept. 2	Las Vegas, NV	818-593-5000	www.magiconline.com	Apparel
Cartoon Forum	Sept. 22-26	Cordoba, Spain	32-2-245-1200 (Belgium)	cartoon@skynet.be	Anim
MIPCOM Junior	Oct. 2-3	Cannes, France	33-1-41-90-4400	www.mipcom.com	Prod/Dist
MIPCOM	Oct. 4-8	Cannes, France	33-1-41-90-4400	www.mipcom.com	Prod/Dist
East Coast Video Show	Oct. 5-7	Atlantic City, NJ	203-256-4700	www.ecvshow.com	Video
Frankfurt Book Fair	Oct. 13-18	Frankfurt, Germany	49-69-210-2256	—	Pub/MM
American International Toy Fair	Feb. 13-17, 2000	New York, NY	212-675-1141	info@toy-tma.com	Toys/Games

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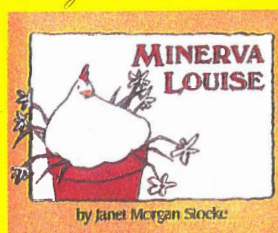
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